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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Wednesday, 28 July 1999, at 10.00 a.m.

President: Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia)  
(Vice-President)

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In the absence of Mr. Fulci (Italy), Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (agenda item 9) (continued) (E/1999/L.34)

Draft resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (E/1999/L.34)

Mr. FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, drew the Council's attention to three paragraphs that had been added to an earlier version of the draft following informal consultations, namely, the sixth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 16 and 17.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria), Mr. WALUBITA (Zambia), Ms. PEGADO (Observer for Angola) and Mr. KOUASSI (Observer for the Côte d'Ivoire) said they wished to become sponsors of the draft resolution.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING JERUSALEM, AND THE ARAB POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN (agenda item 11) (continued) (E/1999/L.32)

Draft resolution on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (E/1999/L.32)

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, to which should be added the representatives of Cuba and Pakistan, described the hardships suffered by the Arab populations of the occupied Arab territories at the hands of the Israelis. The Palestinians were still awaiting implementation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and of the various agreements. The Israeli occupation was not only a source of violence and instability in the region but also severely affected the economic and social development of the occupied territories. The Israeli authorities must be urged to abide

strictly by their international commitments, since further delaying tactics would have a negative impact on the peace process and jeopardize the prospects of peaceful cohabitation and cooperation.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS (agenda item 13) (continued)

(e) ENVIRONMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon (E/1999/L.40)

Mr. PALIZ (Observer for Ecuador), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, emphasized the constructive spirit of the informal consultations which had made it possible to reach a consensus on the text of the draft resolution. He hoped that it could be adopted without a vote.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (agenda item 14) (continued)

(a) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued)

(b) SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(c) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)

(d) NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued)

(e) UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (continued)

Draft resolution on the revitalization of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (E/1999/L.41)

Ms. ELLIOTT (Observer for Guyana), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, reiterated the importance attached by the Group of 77 and China to a revitalization of the International Research Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The draft resolution reaffirmed the Institute's mandate and recommended concrete measures to address its dire financial situation.

Several minor editorial changes had been made during informal consultations in which the European Union and other interested parties had taken part. In addition, a new fourth preambular paragraph had been added to read: "Underlining the importance of research and training for the advancement of women" and the eighth preambular paragraph had been revised to read: "Emphasizing the need to reorganize the structure of the Institute by maintaining administrative costs at a minimum and by funding of its project activities through voluntary contributions."

Mrs. RODRIGUEZ MANCÍA (Observer for Guatemala), describing the situation of women in her country said that 60 per cent of them lived in rural areas and some 45 per cent of them were under 15 years of age. Up to 90 per cent of rural indigenous women were illiterate, compared to an overall illiteracy rate of 36 per cent. The majority of Guatemalan women were subject to poverty, including extreme poverty. Despite the legislative situation, de facto discrimination persisted.

Her Government was therefore prioritizing the advancement of women and the related issue of peace. Legal and institutional mechanisms had been established to further a wide range of women's rights. Conscious, also, of the double burden of discrimination to which indigenous women were subjected, the Government had recently created an Office for Indigenous Women.

Much remained to be done to improve the situation of women. To that end, regional and international cooperation were vital. In view of the importance of research and training for the advancement of women and the need to ensure that INSTRAW was given the support it needed, her delegation hoped that the Council would adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Ms. CALLANGAN (Observer for the Philippines) underscored the importance of research and training for the advancement of women, especially rural women in developing countries. INSTRAW was the only United Nations entity devoted to that task, hence the importance of political and financial support to enable it to pursue its mandate with greater efficiency. The Institute should be revitalized to enable it to continue to address areas of common concern, such as the negative impact of globalization on women's employment and the feminization of poverty. Her delegation supported the proposed draft resolution.

Mr. KRISAFI (Observer for Albania) said that of the many important topics discussed by the Council, the one of most concern to his delegation was, understandably, the devastating situation that had recently faced the Albanian people and Government, which would have taken even the most powerful countries by surprise. His people and Government had defied Milošević, whose centuries-old policy of ethnic cleansing was designed both to annihilate the Kosovo Albanians and to destabilize Albania. When the first wave of Kosovars had arrived in Albania, his Government had taken urgent steps to shelter them. The tales they brought spoke of an extraordinary escalation of violence and

killings by the Serb police and army, and the deportation of over 1.5 million Albanians that heralded a terrible humanitarian disaster. Albania had borne the brunt of receiving the refugees, accommodating them in family homes, tents and collective centres.

He expressed his country's gratitude to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the other United Nations agencies, to the other inter-governmental organizations and to the very many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and countries around the globe, without whose support Albania would have been totally unable to handle the refugee influx.

The victory of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) over Milošević had saved the Balkans and ended the tragedy of the Kosovars who, with the help of UNHCR, the competent Albanian national authorities and the NATO forces, had returned to their homes within a matter of three short weeks. The returning refugees had been briefed and trained in mine-avoidance techniques at specially established centres, where provisions had also been distributed. Transport to the border had also been provided.

However, even with Kosovo's return to peace, the task of UNHCR, supported by the international security force (KFOR), had not ended. Some teams were still helping homeless or hungry Kosovar families, while others had remained in Albania to rehabilitate the premises that had served as reception centres. They merited the praise and gratitude of his country.

Mr. DOROUDI (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) having commended the comprehensive report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/1999/21), said that his country had been receiving refugees since 1979 and, for the last seven years, had been host to some 2 million refugees, the largest number in any receiving country. In critical situations in the past, the number entering Iran had been over 5 million, with pressures that would paralyse the social and economic development of even a developed country. In the light of his Government and people's sincere commitment to humanitarian aid, they had done their best to provide all the refugees with basic services. The problem, however, called for an international response to relieve inadequate funding and to share the burden, most of which was being borne by developing countries.

His Government believed that voluntary repatriation was the best durable solution, since it gave hope to desperate refugees and returning families, curtailed host countries' suffering, and eased the burden on the international community.

Mr. STREJCSEK (Poland) commended the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Poland had presented to the Eighth Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice a draft resolution containing a proposal for the convening in 2000 of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries, in the hope that the Convention could be presented to the Millennium Assembly. It would also be contributing US\$ 20,000 to the Centre for International Crime Prevention.

While Austria's preparations for the Tenth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders were laudable, there were still some unanswered questions about the Political Declaration, which his delegation wished to see concluded before the start of the Congress in order to avoid unnecessary confrontation, using the formula used for the preparation of the General Assembly's special session on narcotic drugs.

Miss LICONA ALLAM (Honduras) said that her delegation supported INSTRAW, which had much to contribute to the advancement of women through research and training, and endorsed the reforms proposed in the draft resolution by the Group of 77, which deserved the Council's full support.

Honduras had a medium-term and a long-term plan for the advancement of women, which promoted policies that conformed to the main lines of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which the country was a signatory. It respected and promoted women's free and equal participation in all areas of society. In 1994, her Government had established an office for women, which coordinated government actions for the promotion of women, reflecting the country's interest in according women equal status with men. Indeed, for the first time in Honduran history, the Central Bank had a woman president.

Pursuant to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, Honduras had passed a number of laws for the protection of women which, it was hoped, would alter relations between the sexes and promote women's access to sport, culture, political life and decision-making. It was intent on bringing its laws fully into line with

its international commitments, and women were consulted before legislation was passed. However, financial assistance was needed for its projects to integrate women into activities at all levels.

Mrs. OVIEDO ARBELAEZ (Colombia) said that her delegation welcomed the emphasis placed on all aspects of women's health in the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/1999/54), an area in which Colombia had made great strides. Recognizing the link between women's physical and mental health and a country's development, her Government had done its best to give women equal access to full, high-quality, inexpensive health services, but the necessary capital investment was beyond its means.

There was urgent need for an international environment conducive to the gender-equal development of States, since legislative and social progress did not suffice for the full flowering of women in a world where poverty was at the root of their difficulties. The economic crisis that most developing countries were undergoing, exacerbated by globalization, required measures which, combined with employment and gender strategies, would promote economic growth and the distribution of wealth.

Colombia had been one of the most successful Latin American countries in eliminating discrimination against women. It supported the draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and had granted women rights in all social, legal and political areas. It had created an ombudsman's office for children, women and the elderly; reduced female illiteracy; and rid textbooks of gender stereotypes.

Her delegation supported the revitalization of INSTRAW's work and looked forward to its financial and administrative strengthening and the recovery of its operating budget, which had been used for units unconnected with its work, as documented in the JIU report (A/54/156-E/1999/102).

Ms. CASSAM (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that UNESCO, which housed the Education for All (EFA) secretariat, considered General Assembly resolution 54/84 to be a major directive which lent authority to the EFA Assessment exercise launched by a joint decision of a number of organizations of the United Nation system in April 1997. The Inter-Agency Technical Advisory Group, working in 11 regions of the world, was assisting the Member States to evaluate the progress



made and obstacles encountered in reaching the educational objectives set by the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien in 1990. The evaluation included the collection of up-to-date statistics for synthesis into 18 core EFA indicators reflecting the most important targets of the Jomtien Declaration and Framework of Action. The EFA secretariat coordinated the exercise and mobilized the necessary funds.

Regional policy review conferences would consolidate the findings of the Assessment - which would culminate in the World Education Forum to be held at Dakar in April 2000 under the joint auspices of UNESCO and its Jomtien partners - and establish regional educational policy and reform priorities. The World Forum would also decide on the feasibility of launching a United Nations Decade to Eradicate Illiteracy.

Ten years after Jomtien, mass illiteracy remained a major failure of society, whereas the equivalent of four days' global military spending would suffice to finance primary education for all the world's children.

Mr. AHMAD (World Muslim Congress) said that his organization attached great importance to the subject of the advancement of women. No society could grow or prosper without an input from half its population, namely, its women. The Beijing Platform for Action provided a comprehensive framework for the advancement of women, and the Commission on the Status of Women had provided guidance to Governments, the United Nations system and the NGOs on the implementation of the Platform.

In a resolution on the release of women and children taken hostage in armed conflict, the Commission had condemned violent acts against women and children in areas of armed conflict which violated international humanitarian law. His organization strongly supported that condemnation and urged all parties to armed conflicts to respect the rules of international humanitarian law. It felt, however, that the existing safeguards against the abuse of women in times of conflict were less than satisfactory and, consequently, advocated the drafting of a separate convention on the protection of women in armed conflict.

Lastly, the United Nations must continue to play its specific role in the advancement of women. The NGO community needed United Nations guidance and financial support in implementing specific projects at the grass-roots level. All concerned must join hands towards that important objective. The

adoption of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as recommended by the Commission on the Status of Women (E/1999/54, para. 21), would be of assistance in that regard.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the recommendations submitted to it in the reports of its functional commissions. Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-third session (E/1999/27-E/CN.6/1999/10)

The PRESIDENT said that chapter I of the report contained five draft resolutions and three draft decisions that required action by the Council. He reminded the Council that, at its fifth meeting on 25 March 1999, it had already taken action with respect to draft decision III, entitled "Extraordinary Meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women".

He drew the Council's attention to the draft resolution in section A, entitled "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", recommended for adoption by the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. He took it that the Council wished to approve that draft resolution and recommend it for adoption by the General Assembly.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to draft resolution I in section B, entitled "Situation of Women and Girls in Afghanistan". He took it that the Council wished to adopt that draft resolution.

Draft resolution I was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that draft resolution II entitled "Palestinian Women" had been adopted in the Commission by a recorded vote. He had received a request from the representative of the United States of America that a vote should be taken by roll-call on that draft resolution.

At the request of the representative of the United States of America, the vote was taken by roll-call.

Saudi Arabia, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

In favour:     Algeria, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria,  
Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Czech Republic,  
Denmark, El Salvador, France, Germany, Honduras,  
Indonesia, Italy, Latvia, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco,  
Mozambique, Pakistan, Poland, Russian Federation, Rwanda,

Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela, Viet Nam.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Norway

The draft resolution was adopted by 34 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions.\*

Ms. KING (United States of America) said that her delegation had voted against the resolution because it ignored recent events, including the elections in Israel and the coming to power of a new Government. Her delegation believed that there was a real potential for forward movement in the peace process. By harking back to another era, the resolution was disappointing and counter-productive.

Mr. AARDAL (Norway) said that his delegation shared the concern regarding the difficult situation of Palestinian women and their families as described in the resolution. That concern was the underlying basis for the considerable efforts that Norway had made and continued to make to provide assistance to the Palestinian people. Since the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, Norway had transferred funds of more than US\$ 220 million to the Palestinian people. It paid special attention to the need to involve Palestinian women in the development process, to which it remained strongly committed, and had expressed its readiness to maintain the level of support for the next five years.

His delegation believed it was essential that issues related to the peace process should be dealt with by the parties themselves, through direct negotiations in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the peace agreements. In its view, the Commission on the Status of Women was not the right forum for addressing problems pertaining to the Middle East peace process. It had therefore abstained in the vote on the resolution in the Commission and in the vote just taken.

Mr. HYNES (Canada) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote. Although it continued to be concerned about the situation of Palestinian women, it believed that some elements of the resolution just adopted, in particular the fifth preambular paragraph and paragraph 2, did not

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\* The delegations of Djibouti, India and Sri Lanka subsequently informed the Council that they had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

reflect the latest positive elements in the Middle East process. As a strong supporter of that process, his delegation believed that the Council, and all other United Nations organs, should adopt an encouraging stance and should approach deliberations on those questions in a manner that would encourage all the parties in their efforts to make peace.

Mr. KUMAMARU (Japan) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote although it had voted in favour of the resolution in the Commission on the Status of Women. It believed that, given the current situation, some parts of the resolution, in particular the fifth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 2, needed to be updated.

Ms. GEELS (New Zealand) said that her delegation shared the concern about the rights of Palestinian women and their families but considered the resolution to be out of date, particularly the paragraphs to which the last two speakers had drawn attention. In her delegation's view, Israel had made definite progress since the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Middle East peace process itself had developed positively in recent months. It had therefore abstained in the vote on the resolution which did not take sufficient account of the recent positive developments.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to draft resolution III entitled "System-wide, medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002-2005". He took it that the Council wished to adopt that draft resolution.

Draft resolution III was adopted.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to draft resolution IV, entitled "Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action". He took it that the Council wished to adopt that draft resolution.

Draft resolution IV was adopted.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to draft decisions I and II in section C of the report. He took it that the Council wished to adopt those draft decisions.

Draft decisions I and II were adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council had thus concluded its consideration of the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Report of the Commission for Social Development on its thirty-seventh session (E/1999/26-E/CN.5/1999/15)

The PRESIDENT said that chapter I of the report contained one draft resolution (section A) and one draft decision (section B) recommended for adoption by the Council. In addition, the Council was required to take action on decision 37/101 of the Commission, contained in section C of the chapter.

The draft resolution entitled "Policies and programmes involving youth", had been adopted by consensus in the Commission but the observer for Portugal had since proposed an amendment thereto (E/1999/L.31).

Mr. FERREIRA (Observer for Portugal) said that, after consulting all interested delegations, he had decided to introduce a minor change in the form of a new paragraph 16, requesting the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution and, in particular, on progress made in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to accept that amendment and adopt the draft resolution, as amended.

It was so decided.

Ms. KING (United States of America) said that the United States had participated in the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and endorsed the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes adopted by that Conference. Her delegation had joined in the consensus in support of the resolution. She noted, however, that paragraph 9 of the resolution recommended the organization of a second World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, under the aegis of the United Nations. Her delegation supported that paragraph on the understanding that the funds required would not come out of the United Nations regular budget.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to the draft decision in section B. He took it that the Council wished to adopt that draft decision.

The draft decision was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that Chapter I, section C of the Commission's report contained a decision of the Commission, entitled "Nomination of members of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development", which required action by the Council. He took it that the Council wished to confirm the candidates listed in decision 37/101 for membership of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council had thus concluded its consideration of the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission for Social Development.

Report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its eighth session (E/1999/30-E/CN.15/1999/12)

The PRESIDENT said that chapter I of the report contained 10 draft resolutions and 3 draft decisions recommended for action by the Council. The four draft resolutions contained in section A of the report were to be recommended by the Council for adoption by the General Assembly. He drew attention to draft resolution I entitled "Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders". He took it that the Council wished to approve that draft resolution and recommend it to the General Assembly for adoption.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to draft resolution II entitled "Draft United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the draft protocols thereto". He believed that consultations concerning that draft resolution were still in progress. He took it, therefore, that the Council wished to postpone consideration of the draft resolution until a later meeting.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to draft resolutions III and IV. He took it that the Council wished to approve those draft resolutions and recommend them to the General Assembly for adoption.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to section B of the report and to draft resolutions I to VI contained therein. He took it that the Council wished to adopt those draft resolutions.

Draft resolutions I to VI were adopted.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to section C of the report and to draft decisions I to III contained therein. He took it that the Council wished to adopt those draft decisions.

Draft decisions I to III were adopted.

Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its forty-second session  
(E/1999/28-E/CN.7/1999/15)

The PRESIDENT said that chapter I of the report contained five draft resolutions and two draft decisions for action by the Council. He drew the Council's attention to the draft resolution in section A, which was to be recommended by the Council for adoption by the General Assembly. He took it that the Council wished to approve that draft resolution and recommend it for adoption by the General Assembly.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to section B and to draft resolutions I to IV contained therein. He took it that the Council wished to adopt those draft resolutions.

Draft resolutions I to IV were adopted.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to section C and to draft decisions I and II contained therein. He took it that the Council wished to adopt those draft decisions.

Draft decisions I and II were adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council had thus concluded its consideration of the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.