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QUESTION OF AGING

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Paul-Désiré KABORE (Burkina Faso)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 20 September 1985, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fortieth session the item entitled "Question of aging: report of the Secretary-General" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.
2. The Third Committee considered the item jointly with items 89, 90, 91, 95, 97 and 98 at its 16th to 23rd, 37th, 46th and 53rd meetings, on 18, 21, 22, 24 and 28 October and 11, 19 and 25 November 1985. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/40/SR.16-23, 37, 46 and 53).
3. The Committee had before it the following documentation:
 - (a) Report of the Economic and Social Council, chapter V, section B (A/40/3), 1/
 - (b) Question of aging: report of the Secretary-General (A/40/714).
4. At the 16th meeting, on 18 October, the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs and the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs made introductory statements.

1/ To be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/40/3/Rev.1).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

A. Draft resolution A/C.3/40/L.27

5. At the 37th meeting, on 11 November, the representative of Malta introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/40/L.27) entitled "Question of aging" sponsored by Austria, Bangladesh, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Indonesia, Malta, Morocco, the Philippines, Romania, Senegal and the Sudan as well as the Federal Republic of Germany, the Gambia and Thailand.

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote (see para. 13, draft resolution I).

B. Draft resolution A/C.3/40/L.26

7. At the 37th meeting, the representative of Yugoslavia, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/40/L.26) entitled "Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging".

8. A statement by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/C.3/40/L.31.

9. The operative part of the draft resolution read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Decides to establish at the forty-first session of the General Assembly an open-ended Working Group of the Third Committee to study the elaboration of a programme for the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging and to make recommendations on the ways and means for the implementation of this programme;

"2. Appeals to concerned agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to participate actively in the work of the Working Group for the early completion of its task;

"3. Requests the non-governmental organizations concerned to provide, through the Secretary-General, to the Group any information and documentation that will make its task easier;

"4. Requests the Working Group to report to the General Assembly at its forty-second session."

10. At the 46th meeting, on 19 November, the representative of Yugoslavia, on behalf of the States members of the Group of 77, subsequently joined by Canada, France and Greece, introduced a revised draft resolution (A/C.3/40/L.26/Rev.1)

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entitled "Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging" and further revised it orally by inserting the words "by all United Nations bodies, organs and agencies" after "activities undertaken" in operative paragraph 2.

11. At the 53rd meeting, on 25 November, the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning and Co-ordination stated that the draft resolution had no programme or financial implications.

12. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the revised draft resolution without a vote (see para. 13, draft resolution II).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

13. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

Question of aging

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 39/25 of 23 November 1984, in which it recognized the increasing awareness in many countries of issues related to aging and of the need to provide national authorities, at their request, with technical and financial assistance in their efforts to implement policies and programmes,

Reaffirming Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/28 of 29 May 1985, in which Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were urged to continue to strengthen their efforts to implement the principles and objectives of the International Plan of Action on Aging 2/ and in which the Secretary-General was requested to include, on an annual basis, the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging 3/ among the programmes considered at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities,

Emphasizing the importance of regional meetings to consider the implementation of the recommendations of the Plan of Action, as demonstrated by the African Conference on Aging, held at Dakar in December 1984,

2/ See Report of the World Assembly on Aging, Vienna, 26 July-6 August 1982 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.I.16), chap. VI, sect. A.

3/ Previously known as the United Nations Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging.

Emphasizing also the positive results of the convening of seminars and meetings to exchange information, knowledge and experience on the question of aging, particularly among developing countries,

Recognizing that the dramatic increase in the numbers and proportion of older adults has serious socio-economic implications and is resulting in an increasing need for research and training at all levels,

Recalling the recommendations of the International Conference on Population, which paid particular attention to the urgent and emerging issues of aging, 4/

Appreciating the efforts of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to establish a steering committee and working group on the follow-up of General Assembly resolution 39/228 of 18 December 1984 on the International Conference on Population,

Appreciating the attention given to the question of elderly women by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace and the inclusion of this issue in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 5/

Stressing the importance of the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging to assist countries, at their request, in formulating and implementing policies and programmes on aging,

Noting with concern the discrepancies between the resources of the Trust Fund and the number of requests received for assistance,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging; 6/
2. Calls upon Governments to ensure that the question of aging is incorporated into their national development plans in accordance with their culture and traditions;
3. Encourages Governments to consider convening regional and subregional meetings on the applicability of the recommendations of the International Plan of Action on Aging to their particular needs and conditions;

4/ See Report of the International Conference on Population, 1984, Mexico City, 6-14 August 1984 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.XIII.8 and corrigenda).

5/ See A/CONF.116/28, sect. A.

6/ A/40/714.

4. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to promote the exchange of information and experience in order to stimulate progress on the question of aging, to encourage the adoption of measures to respond to the economic and social implications of aging and to meet the needs of older persons;
5. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that due consideration is given to the question of aging in the work of the steering committee and working group on the follow-up of General Assembly resolution 39/228 on the International Conference on Population;
6. Requests the Secretary-General, in implementing his programme on aging, to pay special attention to the question of elderly women;
7. Invites the United Nations Development Fund for Women to give due consideration to projects aimed at benefiting elderly women;
8. Requests the Secretary-General to respond favourably to the request of the African Regional Conference for assistance in establishing an African gerontological society;
9. Urges the Secretary-General to take immediate and urgent steps to promote the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging so that it may effectively continue to provide assistance to developing countries, at their request;
10. Urges the Secretary-General to include in technical co-operation programmes, to the extent feasible under the funding of those programmes, advisory services to developing countries that request them;
11. Invites Governments and non-governmental organizations to continue and, where possible, to increase their contributions to the Trust Fund, and calls upon Governments and non-governmental organizations that have not yet done so to consider contributing to the Trust Fund;
12. Invites the United Nations Fund for Population Activities to consider co-operating with the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging in providing assistance to projects received by the Trust Fund that fall within its mandate;
13. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-first session a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the present resolution;
14. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-first session the item entitled "Question of aging".

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging,

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 33/52 of 14 December 1978, by which it decided to organize a World Assembly on Aging in 1982 as a forum to launch an international programme of action aimed at guaranteeing economic and social security to older persons, as well as opportunities for them to contribute to national development,

Recalling further its resolution 37/51 of 3 December 1982, by which it endorsed the International Plan of Action on Aging adopted by consensus by the World Assembly on Aging, held at Vienna from 26 July to 6 August 1982, 7/

Reaffirming the part of the preamble of the Plan of Action that solemnly recognizes that the quality of life is no less important than longevity and that the aging should therefore, as far as possible, be enabled to enjoy in their own families and communities a life of fulfilment, health, security and contentment, appreciated as an integral part of society,

Well aware that the formulation and implementation of policies on aging are the sovereign right and responsibility of each State, and recognizing that the promotion of the activities, safety and well-being of the elderly should be an essential part of an integrated and concerted development effort,

Concerned that the report of the Secretary-General on the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action 8/ shows that in 1985, 55.4 per cent of the global population of the elderly is living in developing regions and that by the year 2025 over 70 per cent of all persons sixty years of age and over are projected to live in developing countries, which are least prepared to meet the economic and social consequences of this drastic shift in population structure,

Convinced that the elderly must be considered an important and necessary element in the development process at all levels within a given society,

Convinced also that increasing longevity is an achievement of mankind and a sign of progress, and that the aged are an asset and not a liability to society because of the invaluable contribution they can make by virtue of their accumulated wealth of knowledge and experience,

7/ See Report of the World Assembly on Aging, Vienna, 26 July-6 August 1982 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.I.16), chap. VI, sect. A.

8/ See E/1985/6.

Mindful that 1985 is the first year in which the General Assembly has had the opportunity to review the progress made in implementing the Plan of Action, adopted in 1982,

Noting with concern that contributions pledged to the United Nations Trust Fund on Aging decreased to \$39,110 in the twelve-month period ending in December 1984, despite the repeated appeals of the Secretary-General to increase contributions,

Noting also with concern that the expenditures of the Trust Fund are expected to decrease from \$450,000 in the biennium 1984-1985 to \$150,000 in the next biennium,

Alarmed that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987 shows a projected cut of 30 per cent in the funds to be allocated from the regular budget to the Aging Unit of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs,

Deeply preoccupied with the fact that the Aging Unit lacks the structural organization, autonomy, funds and necessary manpower to carry out effectively its mandate of implementing the Plan of Action,

1. Requests the Secretary-General to invite Member States and United Nations bodies and specialized agencies concerned to comment on ways and means of implementing the International Plan of Action on Aging and, in particular, on the desirability and viability of elaborating a United Nations programme for the implementation of the Plan of Action, and to prepare a report on the basis of these comments for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session in 1986;

2. Further requests the Secretary-General to include in this report a full analysis of programmatic and financial aspects of activities undertaken by all United Nations bodies, organs and agencies under the Plan of Action since its inception;

3. Invites the non-governmental organizations concerned that have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to provide, through the Secretary-General, information and documentation that will facilitate this work;

4. Requests the Economic and Social Council to consider this report at its first regular session in 1986 and to make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-first session;

5. Decides to consider at its forty-first session the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council as a matter of high priority.
