



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZAWAWI (Malaysia)

later: Mr. ZADOR (Hungary)

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17p.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 92: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (continued) (A/40/3; A/CONF.116/28 and Corr.1-3; A/40/188 and 239 and Add.1, A/40/365, 703 and Corr.1, A/40/727 and 838)

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AGENDA ITEM 100: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued) (A/40/3, 45 and 623)

- (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)

1. Mrs. DIEGUEZ (Mexico) said that her delegation did not agree with those who said that the main objective of the United Nations Decade for Women - rapid improvement in the status of women throughout the world - had not been achieved. They generally ignored the fact that that process required transformation of the main structures of societies and of economic, political, social and cultural relations between States. It would be unfair or naive to suppose that the United Nations could have brought about all the necessary changes. On the other hand, the Organization had succeeded in placing women's issues within the setting of social problems as a whole and in identifying the changes which the status of women had to undergo in order to overcome complex social, economic or political problems. The Decade had made the entire world aware of the problems affecting women and had promoted dialogue and the conclusion of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

2. Mexico had, for its part, worked for the advancement of women, notably by amending its Constitution to provide for equality between men and women before the law, but legislative measures had not been sufficient to overcome the obstacles linked to age-old traditions and education which had impeded the full integration of women into economic life. In addition, the defects and imbalances of Mexico's

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(Mrs. Dieguez, Mexico)

economic and social structure, further aggravated by the world economic crisis and natural disasters, had inevitably had repercussions on the status of women and, in particular, the most disadvantaged among them.

3. While the Mexico City Conference had brought out the need to amend legislations, the Copenhagen Conference had demonstrated that it was not sufficient to reform the laws if societies did not change their attitudes and do away with certain prejudices.

4. The Nairobi Conference had been the occasion for establishing that the developing countries had been forced, because of their serious economic situation, to reduce considerably the resources for their programmes, especially those aimed at improving the well-being of the most disadvantaged sectors, and that women in particular had seen their employment situation worsen considerably, which had made more difficult their access to the most basic services such as health and education. However, the economic crisis must not serve as a pretext for justifying the lack of political will to adopt immediate measures on behalf of women. It was not acceptable to await the full establishment of the new international economic order in order to give women justice.

5. The Strategies adopted by the Nairobi Conference had great political value but it was regrettable that a large number of resolutions supplementing those Strategies had not been taken up. It would have been useful to establish a committee for that purpose.

6. The United Nations system must now contribute actively to the implementation of those Strategies. To that end, it would be necessary to strengthen existing regional and international machinery and insist that the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies should allocate the financial resources necessary to intensify activities on behalf of women. In particular, the following bodies should be strengthened: the Commission on the Status of Women; the Advancement of Women Branch (Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) so that it could play the role of co-ordinator and advisor to the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women; the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and the United Nations Development Fund for Women. It was also important for women to participate in the preparation and implementation at all levels of programmes and projects of the United Nations system. Discrimination against women existed not only in some countries, but also in some international bodies. During the Decade, the number of women in high-level posts had not increased and promotions were still more frequent for men than for women.

7. Finally, Mexico was gratified that about 80 Member States had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or had acceded to it, but was concerned about the many reservations which some Governments had made with respect to their ratification or accession.

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8. Mr. MPOUEL (Cameroon) said that the Nairobi Conference was an important milestone in the 10-year endeavour of the international community to ensure the advancement of women. Prior to that Conference, efforts had been focused on the adoption or strengthening of laws and measures for guaranteeing women de jure equality with men at all levels. The aim henceforth was the implementation of programmes and concrete measures for achieving de facto equality and encouraging the intellectual development and vocational training which would serve as a basis for the full development of women.

9. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the adoption by the Conference of the Forward-looking Strategies but hoped that the many draft resolutions and the draft declaration annexed to the report of the Conference would be taken up by one of the United Nations bodies.

10. There was much still to be done if the objectives for the year 2000 were to be achieved. It was not sufficient to adopt texts; attitudes must also be changed and there must be awareness of the important role played by women in society. Governments must in particular intensify their efforts with a view to ensuring adequate training and providing technical - and even financial - aid to rural women.

11. He welcomed the activities carried out by the United Nations Development Fund for Women and by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, and was gratified that the new mandate of the Fund would permit it to contribute more generously to improving the status of women; that was particularly important in view of the financial problems faced by many developing countries affected by the economic crisis.

12. Cameroon was a party to the international conventions on the suppression of traffic in women in general and the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. In addition, it had signed and was in the process of ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The problem of legal equality between men and women had never arisen in Cameroon. That equality had been proclaimed in the first Constitution of 1960 and reaffirmed in subsequent ones. Cameroonian women had access to all careers in the civil service on an equal footing with men and were protected from various abuses and violence by special provisions in the penal code and the civil service statute.

13. Recognition of that de jure equality had soon been accompanied by the adoption of political and social measures for promoting the full advancement of Cameroonian women. In several centres in the territory, women could take courses in home economics and learn trades such as sewing or typing, so that they could earn a decent living; they could also hold meetings there to seek equitable solutions for common problems. Several ministries, including the one dealing with the status of women, had special responsibilities with regard to women's issues.

14. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that it would be possible to establish a society to whose development everyone - women and men alike - would contribute their ideas and efforts in a spirit of peace and complementarity.

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15. Mrs. KOZAKOV-MARCOULLIS (Cyprus) welcomed the adoption by the Nairobi Conference of the Forward-looking Strategies, the result of many efforts and a series of compromises, but the main thing was to implement them.
16. While it was natural to stress the advancement of women since the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Women, it was more important and helpful to examine why women were still playing only a secondary role in most countries.
17. It was not enough to promulgate legislation because, unfortunately, equality before the law rarely meant true social, economic and political equality. The necessary infrastructures must also be created to enable women to participate in the mainstream of society and be represented at the upper echelons of the occupational structure, and basic changes in attitudes were needed, primarily through education, to rid society of traditional prejudices which hindered the advancement of women and helped to preserve discriminatory practices in many parts of the world.
18. Cyprus, for its part, had acceded in 1985 to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and was preparing the initial report which it would submit to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, whose work was commendable. Cyprus had also contributed, commensurately with its resources, to the particularly useful activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women which were aimed at the integration of women in the mainstream of development.
19. In conclusion, it was imperative that national efforts should be re-enforced by concerted action at the international level in order to create the necessary conditions for peace, order, development and justice and thus contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. The refugee women of Cyprus and the mothers of those killed or missing had realized beyond any doubt, during the 11 years since the Turkish invasion and occupation, that equality and development were not enough for their emancipation and advancement. Equality and development should indeed be coupled, but they should be linked to peace and justice.
20. Mrs. NDUKU (Zaire) said that the Nairobi Conference had given women the world over a chance to reaffirm their attachment to the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, namely, the promotion of women's effective integration in all areas. The Conference had also helped to strengthen solidarity among all women and made it possible to appraise the results of the Decade.
21. She stressed the very positive outlook of the Forward-looking Strategies, which proposed, in view of the needs of women in general and certain groups in particular, solutions to problems affecting the entire international community.
22. Zaire attached a great deal of importance to equality between men and women, in particular in education. The emancipation of women was indeed essential in order to give them the same opportunities as men in the political, economic, social and cultural sectors of their country and enable them to educate their children.

(Mrs. Nduku, Zaire)

Zairian women enjoyed the same political rights as men, and all doors to culture and education were open to them. In Zaire there had also been an increase in the number of women graduates from universities and in various professions.

23. Zaire was also aware of the need to integrate women in development and ensure them the resulting advantages in all key sectors of the economy. It was regrettable that women, particularly in developing countries, should be the first victims of the world economic crisis, and it was essential to establish a new international economic order that would provide programmes for them. Moreover, women should also contribute to the peace effort.

24. The international community must mobilize its resources to strengthen the role of women in development. She welcomed the work done in that area by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the continuation of the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, in association with UNDP. The end of the Decade should be looked upon as the dawn of a new era to be devoted to the reaffirmation of its objectives: equality, development and peace.

25. Mr. SENE (Senegal) drew attention to the Nairobi Conference's appraisal of 10 years of efforts by the United Nations and its Member States to advance the status of women and improve their position. Senegal was pleased to have participated in the Nairobi Conference, for it recognized the role which women must play in furthering national development, well-being and peace.

26. At Nairobi, progress had been noted in the sharing of tasks between men and women and in the area of de jure equality; de facto equality, however, was still far from being a reality in most economic, social and political sectors. As for development, there had been a very clear feminization of poverty, exacerbated by all forms of discrimination and oppression against women. Women's contribution to peace might have been greater if illiteracy had been fought, if school drop-out rates had been reduced and if fertility had been regulated.

27. He reviewed the outstanding features of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, referring to the major themes of equality, development and peace. That event, which was part of a process already begun by the United Nations and whose goal was to incorporate women completely in development, required concerted international, regional and national efforts. The competent United Nations organizations should mobilize all their resources to that end.

28. Since the Nairobi Conference had been unable to take a decision on the draft resolutions and draft declaration reproduced in the annex to the Conference's report, it would be only logical for the Committee to come a decision on the texts, in particular with a view to the future work of United Nations bodies. The Committee should also express its view on the periodicity of the regional and world monitoring conferences. Moreover, the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies must be publicized as widely as possible and be analysed at all levels, because the great project engendered by the spirit of Nairobi must be implemented.

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29. Mrs. TAVARES DE ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that the year 1982 had seen the establishment in the Dominican Republic of the General Directorate for the Advancement of Women, under the Presidency of the Republic, as also of the Interconstitutional Council for the Advancement of Women, a body which provided a mechanism for co-operation between Government services concerned with the advancement of women. The Government also co-operated closely with non-governmental organizations. The new national institutions had done much to promote family legislation during the Decade. In the field of production, efforts had been made to encourage co-operatives managed by women. Vocational training of women had also been promoted, and research on the status and advancement of women had been encouraged. National plans to implement the decisions adopted at Nairobi were now being prepared.

30. Her country was in favour of strengthening the Commission on the Status of Women. However, it felt that questions concerning women should not be limited exclusively to certain institutions but should be on the agendas of the greatest possible number of bodies, conferences and meetings, within and outside the United Nations system. In the future, questions relating to the status of women should be recognized as having paramount importance.

31. Her country welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, which must be provided with adequate financial resources. She hoped that the association of that Fund with UNDP would enable it to receive contributions in amounts comparable to those made to other important United Nations funds.

32. In welcoming INSTRAW to its territory, her country had made more than a symbolic gesture of support for the improvement of the status of women. The programmes of the Institute, outlined in document A/40/707, would play a major role in the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. Financial contributions to the Institute should therefore continue to increase in order to allow it to function effectively, particularly in gathering as many statistics on women as possible.

33. Mrs. LEGWALIA (Botswana) stressed the usefulness of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, which should continue to be supported by all States Members of the United Nations and by other bodies. She recalled the adoption of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women at the Nairobi Conference, and noted the psychological, technical and material obstacles still preventing women from fully participating in progress, especially in the developing countries. Prejudices transmitted through culture, tradition and education resulted in a sexist division of roles and in stereotypes of which women in developing countries were the main victims.

34. To overcome those obstacles, the Botswana Government had adopted an integrated development strategy for the benefit of all citizens, regardless of sex, race, creed or ethnic group. That general approach gave special recognition, however, to the specific problems and needs of certain groups, especially women. For example,

(Mrs. Legwalia, Botswana)

special services had been established in the Ministry of Local Government and Lands to improve women's standard of living, in the Ministry of Agriculture to give them the benefit of extension activities, and in the Ministry of Home Affairs to facilitate and stimulate their integration in development. The last-named of those initiatives had led to regional seminars, national conferences and research activities which had heightened awareness of women's concerns in the area of development. In addition, the forthcoming Botswana five-year development plan would contain a section on women's problems.

35. Governments should recognize the significant role which women could play in development. In developing countries, women were responsible for food production; in Africa in particular, they performed 80 per cent of all agricultural labour and were the real pillar of the economy, without receiving recognition for their enormous contribution. The objective of the Decade, equality between men and women, should be realized within the overall national socio-cultural and legal context. Her delegation found it encouraging that the final document adopted at Nairobi proposed measures intended to end discrimination against women, but noted that Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals had a major role to play in that regard.

36. She welcomed the progress which had been made in health care over the Decade; women's needs were increasingly viewed in terms of general improvement of the mental, physical and spiritual well-being of the community, where much remained to be done, especially in developing countries. She noted the emphasis placed during the Decade on co-operative technical activities to encourage women's participation in economic life and the importance of peace for development and progress.

37. In conclusion, she emphasized the importance of the Forward-looking Strategies and the need for long-term planning and action in the major social and economic areas to promote the advancement of women at the national, regional and international levels. She observed that the Nairobi Conference was not the end but the beginning and that it was up to women to strive to ensure that the strategies adopted there were successfully implemented.

38. Mrs. AZANGO (Liberia) stressed that Africa was proud to have hosted the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: The Decade had heightened the awareness of the international community with regard to the need to integrate women in all areas of national and international life. The Conference had been successful because it had concluded with the adoption by consensus of the Forward-looking Strategies. The African countries, and the Kenyan people in particular, could be proud of that result.

39. The Nairobi Conference had revealed the continuing deplorable condition of women in the twentieth century in many parts of the world, particularly because of the survival of customary law, which prevented many women from enjoying their natural, constitutional and inalienable rights.

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(Mrs. Azango, Liberia)

40. One of the most positive results of the Nairobi Conference was the realization of the universality of women's problems and, consequently, of the fact that solidarity among women could overcome the differences in their points of view. The Nairobi consensus was proof that it was possible to approach women's problems from a feminist perspective, regardless of their political overtones.

41. Her delegation appealed to the Committee to endorse the Forward-looking Strategies, which took into account the needs of all women, including those who belonged to the most vulnerable groups. The Strategies rightly emphasized the crucial importance of the economic and financial aspects of the development of the role of women. Efforts must be directed, particularly at the national level, towards allocating more resources to the improvement of the status of women and their greater involvement in the decision-making process. In that regard, political will was more important than legislation as such. The work of women, particularly work that was not visible, should receive economic recognition. All social and economic statistical data should therefore be systematized on a gender-specific basis and designated specifically for use in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for women. She wished, finally, to stress the importance of the regular monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved.

42. During the United Nations Decade for Women Liberian women had achieved positions of prominence in both the public and private sectors. However, a number of obstacles remained, including illiteracy and the persistence of customs which denied women their right to property, inheritance and the custody of children. The National Commission appointed by the Government of Liberia to review and appraise the Decade had recommended the establishment, within the public sector, of an autonomous bureau of women's affairs. The establishment of that bureau was supported by the two women Government ministers, namely, the Minister of Health and Social Welfare and the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Transportation.

43. With regard to United Nations organs, her delegation welcomed the fact that the mandate of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) would include influencing the flow of resources to women, particularly at the pre-investment stages. In order for its work to be more effective, co-operation between the Fund and the Commission on the Status of Women, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women must be strengthened.

44. INSTRAW, for its part, was playing a vital role at two levels: in gathering data on women to be used as a basis for the preparation of policies which genuinely responded to their needs, and in enhancing women's awareness of the need for self-reliance.

45. So far, 93 States had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It was important for those States which had not yet done so to become parties to the Convention by ratifying it. The Commission on the Status of Women should review, on a regular basis, the progress made in the

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(Mrs. Azango, Liberia)

implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, and should therefore be provided with greater material and human resources. Member States should assign to the Commission high-level representatives responsible for the formulation of national policies for the advancement of women.

46. Mr. KOUNKOU (Congo) said that the People's Republic of the Congo considered the participation of women in nation-building to be of fundamental importance and it provided for the full realization of their rights. The sweeping changes now taking place in the world demonstrated the absurdity of age-old prejudices which caused untold harm to women. No country in the world today could rise to the challenges of modern societies without the participation of women, who constituted a major element of the population.

47. After the revolution of August 1963, one of the tasks of the authorities had been to restore to women rights which had long been denied them. The establishment of the Union révolutionnaire des femmes du Congo had made an important contribution to heightening women's awareness of themselves as participants in development and beneficiaries thereof. The political will of the Congo had also been demonstrated by the passage of legislation to guarantee the equality and rights of all citizens in all spheres of national activity, regardless of sex.

48. During the United Nations Decade for Women, the status of women in the Congo had further improved. Among the factors which had contributed to the gradual removal of inequalities between men and women were the greater awareness of the people themselves and strict application of the provisions of the Constitution of the Congo. The principle that co-educational schooling should be provided free of charge and, in particular the fact that it was compulsory at the primary level was a decisive factor.

49. In the Congo, financial independence was not the privilege exclusively of wage-earning women; women engaged in trade and rural women were also achieving economic independence. To assist mothers of families, the Government had established a social and health infrastructure which was constantly being upgraded. The recently adopted Family Code of the Congo provided additional protection for women and children, particularly in the event of divorce or the death of the spouse.

50. With regard to the Nairobi Conference, he said that his delegation welcomed the extensive assistance provided by United Nations bodies and by non-governmental organizations, which had contributed significantly to the meeting's success. He welcomed in particular the adoption by consensus of the Forward-looking Strategies for the period up to the year 2000. The resolutions and declarations which it had not been possible to consider and adopt at the Conference because of a lack of time should be forwarded to the Commission on the Status of Women for a comprehensive examination at its future sessions.

51. Miss BAZIYAKA (Rwanda) noted that the Nairobi Conference had resulted in a greater awareness, at all levels within the international community, of the status

(Miss Baziyaka, Rwanda)

of women in the family, society and the world, of the need to involve women in the process of development and to abolish the prejudices against them, and of the important role played by women as custodians of traditions, educators, agents of development and contributors to the maintenance and strengthening of peace. The Nairobi Conference had brought together women from 159 Member States who, eager to assume their responsibilities in all sectors of life, had adopted by consensus the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. That consensus, although not complete on all the issues involved, demonstrated the similarity of the status of women throughout the world.

52. Rwanda had participated in the activities of International Women's Year by organizing a literary competition, issuing postage stamps, carrying out a survey on the status of women in Rwanda, publishing a magazine and organizing a number of meetings. It had also been represented by women at meetings and conferences held within the framework of the Decade. In keeping with the progressive policy of the Government, a variety of programmes for women in general had been initiated and research undertaken to identify the obstacles to be overcome and the most appropriate strategies that should be adopted.

53. With a view to implementing the Forward-looking Strategies adopted at Nairobi, the Rwandese delegation to the Conference had recommended to the Government that it should create a national mechanism, establish the socio-economic and health infrastructure to improve the living conditions of the population, improve the means of communication, increase countrywide the number of programmes relating to water supply, appropriate technology and so on, and achieve equality of opportunity between men and women by the gradual elimination of traditions and customs reflecting a conception of women as inferior beings; the implementation of those recommendations should pave the way for the integration of women into all sectors and at all levels of development. However, a relatively long period would still be necessary, particularly in developing countries, to prepare women for useful and effective participation at the upper levels of the hierarchy and to change attitudes, and that would require a new type of education for children. Women must be, at one and the same time, both the agents and the beneficiaries of development, whereas at present their only role was as a factor of production whose real value was not sufficiently recognized. A great deal remained to be done to integrate the contribution of women to development into the national accounts, in conformity with paragraph 120 of the Forward-looking Strategies.

54. Like the delegation of Mali, her delegation would like INSTRAW to diversify the areas of its activity in Africa by closer co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa through the intermediary of its Centre for Women.

55. Her delegation also fully supported the investment programme of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for Africa since the question of food self-sufficiency was likewise a major concern of the Government of Rwanda. She also welcomed the visit to Rwanda of a consultant from the Fund to examine the needs of rural women.

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(Miss Baziyaka, Rwanda)

56. Rwanda had been the first country in Africa to sign the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and it had already submitted its initial report to the competent Committee, one of the Vice-Chairmen of which was Rwandese. While welcoming the increase in the number of ratifications, her country appealed to those Member States which had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention as early as possible.

57. The draft resolutions which the Nairobi Conference had decided to bring to the General Assembly's attention would doubtless contribute to improving the living conditions of women, particularly in the developing countries. They should, therefore, be considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at the special session to be held in 1987, with a view to their adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-second session. The Assembly should invite the Commission on the Status of Women to accord priority, during its special session, to the draft resolutions most likely to contribute to enhancing the living conditions of women, to recognition of women's contribution to development and to their participation in national growth. The General Assembly should also take the speediest possible measures to co-ordinate the work of all bodies dealing with women's problems; to do so would encourage women in the developing and the developed countries alike to uphold and enhance the achievements of the Nairobi Conference until the developing countries' Governments could establish machinery to implement the Forward-looking Strategies.

58. Mr. DE BIE (Suriname) said that the Nairobi Conference had had two aims: to appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women and to adopt the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women during the Period from 1986 to the Year 2000. The main outcome of the Conference was a greater awareness of the economic and political problems currently besetting mankind, particularly women. The world economic situation had made it difficult to achieve the targets of the Decade, and although there had been criticism in that regard there was no questioning the value of the Decade as a symbol and a mechanism for advancing the cause of women throughout the world. An irreversible process had been initiated and it had become possible to assess the complexity of the issues faced.

59. With regard to the Conference's three themes, substantial legislative progress had been made in regard to equality: many Governments had adopted legislative or other measures to ensure equality between men and women, and roughly half the world's nations had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, although the adoption of measures to give effect to its provisions had not kept pace. With regard to development, it was essential to integrate women fully into that process; projects designed for that purpose would contribute significantly to the advancement of societies. As for peace, the international scene was characterized by violations of the Charter and continued aggression, which threatened peace, human progress and the advancement of women. Therefore, steps must be taken to give effect to the main directives set forth in the Declaration on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace.

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(Mr. De Bie, Suriname)

60. No country could develop without the active participation of its entire population. An integral approach to the development strategies was therefore needed, and structural conditions must be created to ensure the advancement of women so as to enlarge countries' development potential.

61. The Government of Suriname, for its part, had established national bodies to deal with women's affairs, and the ongoing dialogue thus initiated had already helped to improve the status of women considerably, to raise the level of women's education and to bring about the adoption of legislation to eliminate discrimination against them and improve health conditions. The results, however, had not been fully satisfactory, mainly on account of the international economic crisis and the coercive economic measures recently adopted in regard to Suriname.

62. In various parts of the world, situations had evolved which were hampering women's contribution to development. In some cases - for example in South Africa, Namibia and Central America and in the territories occupied by Israel - apartheid, military intervention, aggression, coercive measures and occupation of territories were creating a climate unsuitable to development in general and to the advancement of women in particular. Moreover, social services, health care and literacy programmes, all necessary for the advancement of women, required resources; the developing countries, however, were but slowly recovering from economic crises and could concentrate only on vital development sectors, which meant that strategies for the advancement of women were stagnating. Thus, an unjust economic situation was seriously hampering their efforts in that field.

63. It was important for Governments and international organizations to take account of women's needs in development plans; co-operation among developing countries, developed countries and international organizations should include, at all levels, a component designed to promote the advancement of women, since the issue was world-wide in scope. Co-operation at bilateral, subregional or regional levels should focus on exchange of data and findings.

64. Significant differences had emerged at Nairobi in opinions and in proposed strategies concerning appraisal of the Decade. In several fields it had been difficult to achieve a consensus; although the international community was ready to co-operate for the exchange of ideas, strategies and experience, it was necessary to evaluate the findings in various parts of the world within a limited period. As the non-aligned countries had suggested during their conference on that issue held in April 1985 at New Delhi, the work should be evaluated periodically, at intervals of less than a decade if possible.

65. United Nations institutions made a positive contribution to the advancement of women; relations between those institutions and the developed and developing countries should be intensified with a view to achieving the common goal: a just society free from all forms of discrimination and with equal opportunities for men and women.

66. Mrs. BARGHOUTI (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) said that despite the outcome of the Nairobi Conference many problems remained to be solved and many obstacles to be surmounted in the pursuit of peace, development and equality for all, particularly women. Tensions persisted and the arms race continued, despite the fundamental role of women in society. The special oppression suffered by women merely because of their gender called for in-depth study of the causes and of the resultant injustices.

67. Women's liberation was possible only as part of the liberation of society as a whole. Since political, social and economic changes were necessary in order to end the injustices done to women, the Palestinian women joined their cause to that of national liberation. The situation of Palestinian women was a facet of the tragedy of the entire Palestinian people. The Palestinian woman lived in exile, under military occupation and the threat of genocide. The Israelis, not content with seizing the Palestinians' land, sought to obliterate their national culture and identity.

68. On the question of employment, the Palestinian women's problems stemmed from the lack of vocational training for women, of employment for university graduates and of organized efforts to offset the economic conditions created by foreign occupation. The majority of women in gainful employment worked in Israeli agriculture or in industrial service trades - an ample illustration of the difficulties faced by the Palestinian community under Israeli occupation.

69. In education, field research had highlighted the problems: instability in school enrolment, particularly for female students; the drop-out problem, which the Israeli occupation authorities did nothing to solve; the problems of academic freedom, closure orders having spared no university throughout the occupied Palestinian territories; and problems of student safety, an example being the killing of three students and the wounding of 30 at the Hebron Islamic University in June 1983 by Zionist settlers. The Secretary-General, moreover, in his report (A/CONF.116/6), had confirmed the situation of women and children living in the occupied territories. The Israelis, who were always claiming to have improved the living conditions in the occupied territories under their "liberal occupation", and asserted that all the universities had been established since the 1967 war, had had no part whatsoever in establishing or financing universities in the occupied Palestinian territories.

70. Another problem faced by the Palestinian population in general and by women in particular related to health. Levels of hygiene, particularly in the refugee camps, were alarming. UNRWA was paying special attention to the health protection of women and children, who were the most exposed.

71. Priorities in attaining the three interdependent objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women - equality, development and peace - differed from one country to another. For the Palestine Liberation Organization, development meant a change in the socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of life. It was a comprehensive process, with land as its material basis. The Zionist occupation of Palestine remained the main obstacle to the integration of Palestinian women in

(Mrs. Barghouti, Observer, PLO)

development. The issue of equality was not one of equality between men and women, but concerned the Palestinian people as a whole, who were denied the fundamental human rights enjoyed by the majority of the world community, with the exception of South Africa and Namibia. Palestinian women were struggling for the right to self-determination and the right to a peaceful and secure life on their own soil, in an independent State. Further, the Zionist occupation of Palestine and the inhuman practices perpetrated against the Palestinian people were flagrant violations of fundamental human rights and the principles of the Charter. They hampered progress and the peace process. Without a just peace, there could be no real equality of development. Without complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, peace, security and stability could not be achieved. Thus, in their struggle to recover their lands, the Palestinian people were fighting to make a contribution to the maintenance of peace and equality and the promotion of development and progress in the world.

72. The Forward-looking Strategies contained concrete proposals to improve living conditions for women, but the most important point was to implement them. However, for Palestinian women, implementation of the Programme of Action should be kept under review by the relevant United Nations organs, with emphasis on the role of Palestinian women in preserving their national identity, traditions and heritage, and in the struggle for sovereignty. The Palestinian people must recover their right to establish an independent State in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. If it could be said that occupation, torture, confiscation of land and the closure of schools and universities improved the human condition, then, indeed, the Israeli occupation authorities had improved living conditions for Palestinian women.

73. Mrs. Palti (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic had referred to anti-semitism. That racist doctrine of murderous hatred occupied pride of place in Syria, where a notorious Nazi war criminal was very close to the brother of the President. On the very day on which a German weekly had published an interview with the fugitive and his photograph, the Syrian representative had claimed that no such person lived in his country. In defiance of repeated demands for extradition by different countries, Syria sheltered the criminal and supplied him with a bodyguard.

74. The representative of Jordan, among others, had commiserated over the fate of Palestinian Arab women and children in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. To illustrate the remarkable progress made in employment, education and health under Israeli administration, it sufficed to say that the percentage of houses with inside toilets had increased to 92 per cent from a figure of 40 per cent under Jordanian administration in 1967.

75. As for the political environment, there was no doubt that it should be improved. A speedy and positive response to the peace plan presented by Israel to the General Assembly at its fortieth session would benefit all women in the area, both Arab and Jewish. Israel was ready to terminate the state of war forthwith, and trusted that King Hussein would reciprocate.

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76. Mr. GLAIEL (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the lies uttered by the representative of Israel were intended simply to cover up the collusion between the Israeli régime and the racist South African régime, aimed at sowing discord between Arabs and Africans - fraternal peoples united by history and tradition.

77. The Israelis thus displayed their racism while insulting the intelligence of others. The results of the recorded vote on draft resolution A/C.3/40/L.6 concerning the victims of apartheid clearly demonstrated where their sympathies lay.

78. Moreover, the Law of Return, adopted by Israel in 1950, provided that any Jew had the right to return to "his lands" provided he had a visa. That right had been granted to any Jew in the Diaspora, whether or not he had any links with Palestine. Thus, any American or Russian Jew could acquire Israeli nationality with ease. The practice was in keeping with the dogma of the chosen people. In such conditions, how could new Jewish immigrants be expected to be sympathetic to the Palestinians?

79. In the history of zionism, there had at first been a period of reaction to the acts of the Zionist leaders in Europe which the Jews termed "anti-semitism"; it should be noted in that regard that the Arabs, being Semitic themselves, could not be anti-Semitic and, far from being hostile to the Jews, respected all religions. The following phase had consisted in seeking to mislead international public opinion over the question of Palestine. Finally, there had been an attempt to justify Israeli expansion.

80. The General Assembly, in resolution 3379 (XXX), had already condemned zionism, and the time had come to do so again while stressing Israeli racism; those who today supported racism would one day fall victim to it, and come to know the sufferings of an oppressed people.

81. As for the alleged presence of a former Nazi in Syrian territory, Austria had officially contacted the Syrian authorities and it had emerged that the so-called Nazi was a mere figment invented by Israel to divert international attention from its misdeeds.

82. Mr. EL-FAWWAZ (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the allegations of the Zionist entity were utterly baseless, as had been demonstrated by the conclusions of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population in the Occupied Territories, which Israel would be hard pressed to refute. It was clear that the Israelis were trying to terrorize the Palestinian population so as to force them from their lands.

83. As for the status of Palestinian women, it would not be improved by closing schools and universities, usurping land and deporting the inhabitants of the occupied territories. Israeli forces had even gone so far as to close hospitals, particularly the one in old Jerusalem. If Israeli practices in the territories were beneficial, as the representative of the Zionist entity purported, what explanation was there for the fact that the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank opposed the occupying forces with all their might and main, making heroic sacrifices?

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84. Miss BYRNE (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said she was pleased that the Forward-looking Strategies had been adopted by consensus at the Nairobi Conference, and was gratified by the very high quality of most delegations' statements on the items taken up. Unfortunately, some delegations had introduced questions which had been totally irrelevant to the item under consideration, namely the improvement of the status of women. For example, Nicaragua had made odious and baseless accusations against the United States.

85. Mrs. BELLORINI de PARRALES (Nicaragua), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the United States Government lacked the necessary moral probity to criticize her country. The history of international relations had amply demonstrated that Simón Bolívar, the Liberator, had been justified in predicting that the United States would bring only misfortune to the peoples of Latin America. All were aware of the countless instances of United States interference in the domestic affairs of the countries of that continent.

86. Miss BYRNE (United States of America) replied that the remarks made by the representative of Nicaragua were disgusting and completely false.

87. Miss BELLORINI de PARRALES (Nicaragua) retorted that the truth often hurt.

The meeting rose at 9.15 p.m.