

REPORT OF THE WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGING

Vienna, 26 July to 6 August 1982



UNITED NATIONS

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CSDHA | Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs |
| ECA | Economic Commission for Africa |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| ECE | Economic Commission for Europe |
| ECLA | Economic Commission for Latin America |
| ECWA | Economic Commission for Western Asia |
| ESCAP | Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNFPA | United Nations Fund for Population Activities |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organization |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

Chapter I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGING

1. On various occasions before 1977, and even as long ago as 1948 when the General Assembly adopted resolution 213 (III) concerning a draft declaration on the rights of the elderly, the subject of the position of the elderly or aged or older persons in society had received incidental attention in the General Assembly of the United Nations and in the United Nations bodies specially concerned with social questions. For example, in article 11 of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development (resolution 2542 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969, which also refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the International Covenants on Human Rights) the General Assembly had referred inter alia to the need to protect the rights and assure the welfare of the aged. Similarly, in 1973 the General Assembly adopted its resolution 3137 (XXVIII) entitled "Questions of the elderly and the aged". The subject had also been considered by specialized agencies in so far as it is within the scope of their activities, notably by the International Labour Organisation, World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. In addition, the World Population Plan of Action adopted by the World Population Conference of 1974 contains a provision urging all Governments to take fully into account in their development policies, the implications of changing numbers and proportions of the aged in the population.

2. It was in 1977, however, that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly dealt with the subject more specifically. On 16 December of that year the General Assembly, after noting the Council's resolution 2077 (LXII), adopted resolution 32/132 by which inter alia it invited the views of States on the desirability of convening a "world assembly on aging" (para. 2, this being the first occasion on which this expression was used) and decided to consider the matter at its subsequent (thirty-third) session, in the context of an item entitled "Problems of the elderly and the aged" and in the light of a report by the Secretary-General and of pertinent observations by Member States.

3. One year later, in the course of its thirty-third session the General Assembly adopted resolution 33/52 of 14 December 1978 by which it decided inter alia "to organize ... a World Assembly in 1982, as a forum to launch an international action programme aimed at guaranteeing economic and social security to older persons, as well as opportunities to contribute to national development". By the same resolution the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a draft programme for the World Assembly and to submit it, with his recommendations concerning its organization and objectives, through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, two years later.

4. Preparations for the World Assembly continued in the meantime at the national and international level and as part of the activities of the Secretariat of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies and intergovernmental bodies concerned. On 17 December 1979 the General Assembly adopted resolution 34/153 on the "Question of the elderly and the aged" by which, after taking note with appreciation of a progress report by the Secretary-General on the question and recognizing the increase in the number and proportion of the older section of the population in a growing number of countries and the serious economic and social implications of this phenomenon, it addressed certain recommendations to the Governments concerned, including a recommendation concerning their full

participation in the World Assembly scheduled for 1982. In addition, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General inter alia to collect information that might be used by the regional preparatory meetings envisaged in contemplation of the World Assembly and to assist Governments at their request in the planning and implementation of policies for the elderly and in their preparations for the World Assembly. In the same resolution the General Assembly also requested the specialized agencies, other intergovernmental bodies - in particular United Nations funding agencies - and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to continue to give attention and support to activities concerned with the aging.

5. At its spring session of 1980 the Economic and Social Council considered the topic of the "World Assembly on the Elderly", taking into account earlier resolutions of the General Assembly and a report by the Secretary-General. On 2 May 1980 the Council adopted resolution 1980/26, by which it requested the Secretary-General "to designate from outside the United Nations a full-time Secretary-General for the World Assembly ... who shall be a recognized expert on the aging and shall have experience of the United Nations system"; at the same time the Council requested that "every effort should be made to absorb the costs associated with the establishment of the position of Secretary-General of the World Assembly ... through existing resources and/or voluntary contributions". By the same resolution the Council addressed a number of recommendations to the General Assembly; it recommended inter alia that the General Assembly should:

- (i) decide to establish an advisory committee for the World Assembly composed of not more than 23 Member States designated by the Chairman of the Third Committee of the General Assembly on the basis of equitable geographical distribution;
- (ii) request the Secretary-General to convene the advisory committee as early as possible in 1981 at the Vienna International Centre;
- (iii) request the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, to prepare a draft international plan of action in time to be considered by the advisory committee;
- (iv) request the World Assembly to submit, if possible, such proposals and recommendations as it deems appropriate to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

In addition, the Council recommended that the General Assembly should enlist the co-operation of Governments, the specialized agencies concerned, the regional commissions and non-governmental organizations in the preparatory work for the World Assembly and in that Assembly itself.

6. The Council's recommendations were endorsed later in the same year by the General Assembly in its resolution 35/129 of 11 December 1980, by which it was also decided to "change the name of the World Assembly to the World Assembly on Aging in view of the interrelatedness of the issues of aging individuals and the aging of populations". By the same resolution the General Assembly made provision for the establishment of a voluntary fund for the World Assembly and invited contributions to the Fund; it also invited the United Nations Fund for Population Activities to continue to provide financial support to the preparatory work for the World Assembly; and it invited Member States to consider organizing national committees

and activities in support of the purposes of the World Assembly. Lastly, the General Assembly decided to deal with the subject at its thirty-sixth session in the light of a further progress report of the Secretary-General and of the report of the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly.

7. Acting on the request of the Economic and Social Council, as endorsed by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General appointed Mr. William Kerrigan of the United States of America as Secretary-General for the World Assembly on Aging as of 1 June 1981. 1/

8. Also in 1981 the Chairman of the Third Committee of the General Assembly informed the Secretary-General by communications dated 30 June and 13 August 1981 that, after consultation with different regional groups and on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, he had designated the following 22 Member States as members of the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly:

Benin, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Nigeria, Philippines, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Togo, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America and Venezuela. 2/

9. The Advisory Committee held its first session at Vienna from 17 to 21 August 1981. It elected as its Chairman Mr. A. H. B. de Bono (Malta) and its other officers and considered, in particular, preparations for and the proposed organization of the World Assembly and a draft international plan of action on aging. 3/ The Committee adopted a number of recommendations relating to the site of the World Assembly, 4/ to the draft provisional agenda for the World Assembly and to the organization of the World Assembly and of the Committee's second session.

10. At its thirty-sixth session the General Assembly adopted two resolutions relevant to the topic. By the first of these, resolution 36/20 of 9 November 1981 entitled "Question of the elderly and the aged", the General Assembly made a number of recommendations addressed to Governments concerning national measures on behalf of the elderly and the aged, appealed to the Member States for voluntary contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging, and inter alia requested the Secretary-General to undertake or strengthen certain activities related to the subject of aging and to report on the results of these activities at the thirty-seventh session. In addition, the General Assembly invited the United Nations Fund for Population Activities "to continue to provide financial support in the field of aging, particularly for the implementation of the plan of action that would result from the World Assembly".

11. By the other resolution, resolution 36/30 of 13 November 1981 entitled "World Assembly on Aging", the General Assembly made certain decisions relating specifically to the World Assembly. It welcomed the offer of the Government of Austria to act as host to the World Assembly; decided that the World Assembly would be held at Vienna from 26 July to 6 August 1982, to be preceded by two days of pre-conference consultations for the purpose of reaching agreement of procedural and organizational matters; approved an organizational structure of the World Assembly; and requested the Secretary-General, subject to the availability of resources, to convene two further sessions of the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly in the first half of 1982.

12. The Advisory Committee held its second session at United Nations Headquarters

from 16 to 22 February 1982, at which and after deliberation in the course of nine meetings it adopted 10 recommendations and decisions concerning notably participation in the World Assembly, the provisional agenda for the World Assembly, provisional rules of procedure for the World Assembly, and the date, place and agenda for the Committee's third session. 5/

13. At its third session, held at Vienna from 3 to 7 May 1982, the Advisory Committee considered further the text of a draft international plan of action on aging and preparations for the World Assembly, and took a number of decisions. In particular it recommended a revised text of the provisional agenda for adoption by the Assembly, and agreed (subject to certain reservations) on the text of a draft international plan of action. The Committee further recommended to the World Assembly for its approval various measures regarding the procedure and organization of the Assembly and its Committees, including the allocation of agenda items, the appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee, the election of officers of the General Committee and of the Main Committee, and the status and the participation of non-governmental organizations in the World Assembly. 6/

14. The many activities preparatory to the World Assembly on Aging had included also technical meetings at various levels at which topics likely to be dealt with by the World Assembly were considered. These meetings had been convened variously on the initiative of the Secretariat, of the regional commissions, or of specialized agencies, in conformity with the relevant recommendations of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, or on the initiative of Governments or of non-governmental bodies in certain countries or regions. Thus, a meeting of experts of the Middle East and Mediterranean regions was held in Malta in June 1980; a meeting concerned with the Latin American region was held in Costa Rica in December 1980; a meeting dealing with the Asia and Pacific region was held in Bangkok in January 1981; a meeting concerned with the African region was convened in Lagos in February 1981. A meeting concerned with North America was convened in June 1981 at the invitation of a non-governmental organization of the United States of America. A meeting for Western Europe was held at the invitation of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany in June 1981. As regards Eastern Europe, the Institute of Gerontology of the USSR Academy of Medical Science in Kiev prepared, jointly with like institutes of other countries of Eastern Europe, a report on the question of aging as it arises in this region.

15. Subsequently, a series of intergovernmental meetings to consider questions relating to aging were convened, under the auspices of the regional commissions concerned, for each of the major regions with the object of drafting regional plans that might be taken into account in the preparation of the international plan of action to be adopted by the World Assembly. The regional meeting for Asia and the Pacific was held in October 1981, those for Africa and Latin America in March 1982, and that for the ECE region in April 1982. In lieu of arranging an intergovernmental meeting, the region of Western Asia submitted a document containing guidelines and recommendations on aging to the annual meeting of the Economic Commission for Western Asia in May 1982 for its approval as a contribution to the preparation of the draft international plan of action.

16. For their part, the specialized agencies and other bodies concerned of the United Nations system arranged meetings in September 1980, April 1981, February 1982 and May 1982 for the purpose of reviewing and co-ordinating their activities and contribution in preparation for the World Assembly. Several of the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system contributed documents

or studies concerning specific aspects of the phenomenon of aging for submission to the World Assembly.

17. A large number of international non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council co-operated fully with the United Nations in a series of activities preparatory to the World Assembly. In particular, a forum of such organizations was held in Vienna in March 1982 in preparation for the Assembly.

Notes

1/ See the relevant report of the Secretary-General, A/36/472, para. 4.

2/ Ibid., para. 5.

3/ For particulars of the election of officers, attendance of members and an account of the Committee's proceedings at that session see its report in document A/36/472, annex.

4/ See a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria dated 6 May 1981 addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (document A/36/357).

5/ For particulars of attendance at the session, the list of officers (who were re-elected) and the text of the decisions as well as an account of the deliberations at that session see the Committee's report (A/CONF.113/11).

6/ For the text of the Advisory Committee's recommendations see the report on its third session (A/CONF.113/24).

Chapter II

ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Date and place of the World Assembly

18. The World Assembly on Aging was held at Vienna from 26 July to 6 August 1982, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 36/30 of 13 November 1981. During that period the World Assembly held 17 plenary meetings.

B. Pre-conference consultations

19. Pre-conference consultations open to the participation of all States invited to the World Assembly were held at Vienna on 24 and 25 July 1982 to consider a number of procedural and organizational matters. The consultations were conducted under the chairmanship of Mr. A. H. B. de Bono (Malta), Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly. The report on the consultations (A/CONF.113/L.1 and Add.1) was submitted to the World Assembly and was accepted as a basis for the organization of its work.

C. Attendance

20. The following States were represented at the World Assembly:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Afghanistan | Denmark | Japan |
| Algeria | Djibouti | Jordan |
| Angola | Dominican Republic | Kenya |
| Argentina | Ecuador | Kuwait |
| Australia | Egypt | Lebanon |
| Austria | El Salvador | Lesotho |
| Bahrain | Ethiopia | Liberia |
| Bangladesh | Finland | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya |
| Belgium | France | Luxembourg |
| Benin | Gabon | Malawi |
| Botswana | Gambia | Malaysia |
| Brazil | German Democratic Republic | Maldives |
| Bulgaria | Germany, Federal Republic of | Mali |
| Burundi | Greece | Malta |
| Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic | Guatemala | Mauritius |
| Canada | Guinea | Mexico |
| Cape Verde | Guinea-Bissau | Morocco |
| Central African Republic | Haiti | Mozambique |
| Chad | Holy See | Netherlands |
| Chile | Hungary | New Zealand |
| China | Iceland | Nicaragua |
| Colombia | India | Niger |
| Congo | Indonesia | Nigeria |
| Costa Rica | Iran | Norway |
| Cuba | Iraq | Pakistan |
| Cyprus | Ireland | Panama |
| Czechoslovakia | Israel | Peru |
| Democratic Kampuchea | Italy | Philippines |
| Democratic Yemen | Ivory Coast | Poland |
| | Jamaica | Portugal |

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Republic of Korea | Switzerland | United Republic of Cameroon |
| Romania | Syrian Arab Republic | United Republic of Tanzania |
| Rwanda | Thailand | United States of America |
| San Marino | Togo | Upper Volta |
| Saudi Arabia | Trinidad and Tobago | Uruguay |
| Senegal | Tunisia | Venezuela |
| Seychelles | Turkey | Viet Nam |
| Spain | Ukrainian Soviet Socialist | Yemen |
| Sri Lanka | Republic | Yugoslavia |
| Sudan | Union of Soviet Socialist | Zaire |
| Suriname | Republics | Zambia |
| Swaziland | United Arab Emirates | |
| Sweden | United Kingdom of Great Britain | |
| | and Northern Ireland | |

21. The United Nations Council for Namibia was represented at the Assembly.

22. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation of the United Nations was present at the Assembly. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations was represented at the Assembly.

23. The secretariats of the following regional commissions were represented at the World Assembly:

- Economic Commission for Europe
- Economic Commission for Latin America
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- Economic Commission for Africa
- Economic Commission for Western Asia.

24. The following United Nations bodies and programmes were also represented:

- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- United Nations Fund for Population Activities
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
- United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board.

25. Representatives of the following specialized agencies and related organizations participated in the work of the Assembly:

- International Labour Organisation
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- World Health Organization.

26. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers:

European Economic Community

League of Arab States.

27. A large number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council attended the World Assembly. For the list of participants see document A/CONF.113/INF.1 and Corr.1, 2 and 3.

D. Opening of the Assembly and election of its President
(agenda items 1 and 2)

28. The Assembly was opened on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations by Mr. Jean Ripert, Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. In his opening statement the Director-General pointed out that never before had nations of the world gathered to focus attention exclusively on issues relating to aging and the elderly and, in this connection, to contribute to the achievement of the ultimate aim of development, which, as stated in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, was: "the constant improvement in the well-being of the entire population on the basis of its full participation in the process of development and a fair distribution of the benefits derived therefrom".

29. He noted that only a few years ago the issue of aging had been perceived as being an important one and of immediate concern for developed countries only, but now it had become evident that it could not be considered a minor issue for the developing countries. The number of elderly in the world was expected to exceed 1 billion in 50 years' time, almost three quarters of them likely to be living in developing regions by then. This demographic trend was a result of efforts to control perinatal and infant mortality, to ensure decline in birth rates, improvements in nutrition, health care and control of infectious diseases in many regions of the world. It was also a consequence of efforts to ensure world peace and stability. In fact, for industrialized and developing countries alike, the question of aging has become more than a demographic or social issue, it has also become a developmental issue.

30. The changes occurring as a result of the increasing ratio of the elderly dependent for their well-being or even their sustenance on the younger and economically active people would have an influence on socio-economic systems of all countries. Problems were bound to arise in countries where the aged traditionally benefited from the care and protection of next-of-kin or local communities. The nature of such relationships became tenuous in countries where the number of the elderly dependent on the economically active population increased concurrently with a progressive erosion of traditional structures, like the extended family, by the pressures of modernization, urbanization, and by changing social values and attitudes accompanying economic growth. These difficulties, many of which required longer-term solutions, were aggravated by the current economic crisis, marked by inflation, recession, and a rise in underemployment and unemployment. The situation worsened in cases where Governments were compelled by severe economic constraints to make difficult choices in the allocation of public resources. More often than not, the social sectors received lower priority. There was a tendency to give less attention to programmes for the elderly than, for example, to those in favour of the young which were more readily viewed as a form of investment in the future. In this connection, he stressed the need for concerted and urgent efforts

by Governments to ensure world economic recovery and, in particular, acceleration of development of third world countries.

31. One of the important objectives for many developing countries was to extend life expectancy. That had a bearing on development, if the elderly were to be ensured a life of human dignity and decency. There was a need, therefore, to accelerate the development of developing countries and to extend its benefits to all parts of the population. Even in the industrialized countries, a longer and healthier life was not a privilege shared equally by all individuals, mortality and morbidity rates being higher in the poorer groups. Accordingly, what was needed was a more equitable distribution of resources, both at the national and international levels.

32. Referring to the draft Plan of Action, he stated that the draft Plan rightly emphasized that the issues of aging should be viewed in the context of the over-all socio-economic conditions prevailing in society. The aging must be considered as an integral part of the population and as an important and necessary element in the developmental process. The draft Plan rightly pointed out that policies and programmes were necessary to respond to the specific needs and constraints of the elderly. Several useful recommendations were made in the draft Plan for measures in the fields of health, housing and the environment, family, social welfare, income security and employment, and education. The draft Plan identified certain areas for co-operation in research and the exchange of information and experience at the international level. It stressed the need for education of the general public about the aging process and the aging themselves.

33. The Director-General stressed that existing data on aging should be enlarged and improved in order to assist Governments in the formulation, application and evaluation of policies and programmes for the elderly, and to ensure the integration of the aging in the development process. In this regard, he stressed the importance of the exchange of skills, knowledge and experience between countries. Another issue deserving careful study and consideration, at national and international levels, was that of retirement policies and their impact on employment. While the lowering of the retirement age might increase employment opportunities for the young, he noted that at the same time it might lead to the arbitrary removal of able persons from the productive process. In addition, in developing countries, the young and more active sectors of the population were migrating from the rural to urban areas in search of employment, and this trend resulted in an increasingly insecure future for the elderly persons left behind.

34. The draft Plan drew attention to the need to reduce the costs of social service and health care systems. This was an area where exchange of information and experience between countries was likely to yield dividends. There was also an obvious need to examine ways and means of ensuring an appropriate, if not adequate, share of resources for social services for the aging. Mutually beneficial exchanges on the issues of aging could also be made between developed countries, that were experimenting with a wide range of social welfare and security schemes for the elderly, and the developing countries whose traditional social structures and practices emphasized the importance of the family and the community. There was perhaps even greater potential for co-operation among the developing countries themselves because of their common cultural values and similar socio-economic problems. The draft Plan emphasized the importance of intensifying international co-operation, including in particular regional co-operation, to provide direct assistance in response to requests from Governments and to promote co-operative research, and exchange of information and experience among interested countries.

35. The Director-General noted with appreciation the contribution of the Advisory Committee to the formulation of the draft Plan of Action as well as the contribution of the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to the preparation of the World Assembly. He expressed his confidence that the non-governmental organizations would fully support the implementation of the Plan of Action.

36. He also recognized the co-operation from, and the contribution by, the specialized agencies concerned and the regional commissions of the United Nations in the substantive preparations for the Assembly and expressed the hope that this co-operation would be furthered and strengthened.

37. In conclusion, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, he assured the Assembly that the United Nations Secretariat, in particular the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, in close collaboration with concerned organizations of the United Nations system, would make every effort to ensure the effective implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the World Assembly on Aging upon their approval by the General Assembly at its forthcoming session.

38. In an inaugural address, His Excellency Dr. Rudolf Kirchschräger, Federal President of the Republic of Austria, the host country, welcomed the participants and, on behalf of the Government and people of Austria, conveyed best wishes for the success of the World Assembly on Aging. He stated that, although the United Nations was an organization of States, its activities and policies must focus on the individual and on mankind. It had thus far dealt with political, social and economic fundamental rights and with the status and treatment of, for example, women, children and the disabled. In convening the World Assembly on Aging, the United Nations had demonstrated its sensitivity to problems arising from daily life.

39. Dr. Kirchschräger emphasized that, in an effort to enhance the quality of life of the aging, nations must also strive to achieve the main purpose of the United Nations, inter alia, to eliminate war, violence and the threat of force in international relations, to aim at disarmament, and to establish a new international economic order so as to bridge the chasm between the industrialized and the developing countries.

40. Many old people were troubled by the cares of daily life and suffered from loneliness or lack of appreciation. Others needed care because of illness or other disabilities. The needs varied from individual to individual, and also according to the environment and political and economic situation of their countries. The economic and social circumstances of the aging who were in need could be alleviated by Governments, by society and, in some instances, by self-help. Support for the needy in this age group might be provided by the family, neighbours and the community. He hoped that an action-oriented programme for the social and economic security of the aging and for their participation in development would be elaborated during the Assembly.

41. The World Assembly elected by acclamation Dr. Hertha Firnberg, Federal Minister for Science and Research and head of the delegation of Austria, as President of the World Assembly on Aging.

42. In thanking the World Assembly on behalf of the Government and people of Austria for her election, the President said that the documentation for the Assembly indicated that the needs of the elderly and aging would increase and that all nations would be affected in the long run. She emphasized that the deliberations of the Assembly should be aimed not only at policy-makers but also at the mass media, social planners, influential groups and, most important, the average citizen; she hoped that the Assembly would alert world public opinion to the developmental and humanitarian aspects of the phenomenon of aging. The Assembly should arouse the consciousness of the world for the benefit of the aging. It should spare no effort to live up to the expectation and hopes placed in it. Failure would not only put its credibility at risk, but would also have a detrimental effect on the United Nations itself. Millions of people throughout the world expected tangible results from this distinguished gathering.

43. The draft Plan of Action, carefully elaborated during the three sessions of the Advisory Committee, constituted a sound basis and a starting point for a long-term action-oriented programme. The President expressed her gratitude to the members of the Advisory Committee and in particular to its Chairman, Mr. de Bono, for their untiring efforts in drafting the Plan of Action. She hoped that the International Plan of Action would receive the widest possible consensus. To achieve this objective the Assembly should be aware at all times that its essential task was to deal with the problems of aging. Where other, more general, issues arose, no matter how important, she sincerely hoped that their political content would not distract the Assembly from this noble task or prevent it from adopting unanimously a world plan of action.

44. The success of the Assembly would depend to a large extent on following up its decisions. They should cover the institutional, organizational and financial arrangements essential for the implementation of its recommendations. While appreciating that the financial requirements would be difficult to meet at a time of world-wide economic difficulties and constraints, nevertheless the President considered that one should not and could not ignore the very real contribution that the aging themselves could make to the development and to the well-being of a nation. She pointed out that past experience showed that neglecting problems of today could only increase their costs tomorrow. She added the hope that the Assembly would be able to elaborate appropriate mechanisms to that end.

E. Messages from Heads of State or Government

45. At its opening meeting the World Assembly heard messages wishing it success addressed to it by His Holiness the Pope and by the Heads of State or Government of the United States of America, India and Poland (the full text of the messages is contained in annex I to this report).

F. Adoption of the rules of procedure (agenda item 3 (a))

46. At its 1st plenary meeting on 26 July 1982 the World Assembly adopted the provisional rules of procedure approved by the Advisory Committee (A/CONF.113/2), subject to the amendment of rule 6 to read:

"Elections

"The World Assembly shall elect the following officers: A President, three Vice-Presidents for Co-Ordination, 21 other Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur-General, as well as a Chairman for the Main Committee established in accordance with rule 42."

G. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (agenda item 3 (b))

47. At the same meeting the World Assembly adopted as its agenda the provisional agenda recommended by the Advisory Committee (A/CONF.113/1) viz:

1. Opening of the World Assembly
2. Election of the President
3. Organizational and procedural matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the rules of procedure
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
 - (c) Election of officers other than the President
 - (d) Credentials of representatives to the World Assembly:
 - (i) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee
 - (ii) Report of the Credentials Committee
4. General debate
5. Aging and development: the developmental issues
6. Aging and development: the humanitarian issues
7. International plan of action on aging
8. Adoption of the report of the World Assembly

48. Also at the same meeting the World Assembly decided, as recommended by the Advisory Committee's decision 3 (III), that agenda items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 would be considered in plenary meetings and that items 5, 6 and 7 would be considered by the Main Committee.

H. Election of officers other than the President (agenda item 3 (c))

49. At its 1st and 2nd plenary meetings on 26 July 1982 the World Assembly elected the following officers:

Vice-Presidents for Co-ordination: Mr. Babacar Diagne (Senegal)
Mrs. Sylvia P. Montes (Philippines)
Dr. Janos Szentágothai (Hungary)

Vice-Presidents of the Assembly:

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Algeria | Indonesia | Romania |
| Bulgaria | Jamaica | Sri Lanka |
| Chile | Japan | Sweden |
| China | Kuwait | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| Djibouti | Lesotho | United States of America |
| Dominican Republic | Liberia | United Republic of Tanzania |
| France | Morocco | Venezuela |

Rapporteur-General: Mr. L. J. Henar (Suriname)

Chairman of the Main Committee: Mr. A. H. B. de Bono (Malta)

I. Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee
(agenda item 3 (d) (i))

50. The Advisory Committee had recommended that, in conformity with rule 4 of the provisional rules of procedure, the World Assembly should appoint China, Ghana, the Netherlands, the Niger, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America as members of the Credentials Committee, on the understanding that if a State were not present, the Assembly should replace that State by another State from the same regional group, designated by that group.

51. Since Ghana, Papua New Guinea and Paraguay were not represented at the World Assembly, Argentina, Nigeria and Thailand were designated in their stead by the respective regional groups to serve as members of the Credentials Committee. Accordingly, the World Assembly established a Credentials Committee composed of the following States: Argentina, China, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Thailand, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America.

J. Implications of decisions of the World Assembly for the programme budget of the United Nations

52. At the 15th plenary meeting of the World Assembly on Aging, on 5 August 1982, the Secretary made a statement to the effect that any decisions of the World Assembly that had implications for the programme budget of the United Nations would be brought to the attention of the General Assembly by the Secretariat at the time when the report of the World Assembly on Aging was considered.

Chapter III

SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

53. The general debate took place in the course of 13 plenary meetings of the World Assembly from 26 July to 3 August 1982. The passages which follow reflect, in succinct form, the points stressed by speakers in the debate.

54. The representatives of States, observers and the representatives of specialized agencies and United Nations bodies and of several intergovernmental organizations made statements. Statements were also made by a number of non-governmental organizations.

A. Introductory statements

55. Opening the general debate, Mr. William Kerrigan, Secretary-General of the World Assembly on Aging, enumerated the principles that had guided preparations for the Assembly. The first was that the Assembly should have a practical outcome and should come to grips with the demographic changes and resultant aging populations in societies. The second principle was that it should avoid abstractions: Governments should realize that the aging of the population would necessitate changes in social, economic and political institutions while at the same time remembering that they were dealing with human beings. The third principle was that the subject to be dealt with by the Assembly was basic to common humanity.

56. Aging, and being an elderly person, were essentially social and cultural phenomena; they were a shared human experience notwithstanding variations in experience and tradition and differences between developing and developed countries. The Assembly should eschew the risk of breaking down aging into two distinct topics - aging in the developed countries and aging in the developing countries.

57. While in terms of absolute numbers there were today more older people in the developing than in the developed countries, and while the balance was shifting steadily in the direction of the developing countries, the number of the old was growing in all societies and on all continents. The task of the Assembly was to understand the impact of demographic changes on societies and to translate its understanding into a practical plan of action.

58. It would be a mistake, he thought, to argue that the aging of societies was a matter of concern only to rich and developed countries. Both developed and developing countries must ensure the well-being of the aging - their nutrition, their health, their housing, their social ties, their cultural life - although specific conditions varied from country to country.

59. In addition, he said, the economic and social welfare of the whole society would be in danger if the growing needs of the aging group and the potential resources which old people could offer to society were not taken into account. More information was essential in such areas as the relationship of aging of societies to the economy and investment and consumption patterns. He pointed out that even in those few countries where aging was not yet receiving priority attention (because of limited rural to urban migration, limited industrialization or the lack of capital accumulation) the aging of the population was a factor to be reckoned with.

60. As regards the outcome of the Assembly, Mr. Kerrigan felt sure that the Assembly would define basic principles, within the framework and spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that would guide public and private bodies and individuals in dealing with aging. The Assembly should define a basic international strategy, show the way for the United Nations, and make recommendations to Governments.

61. He expressed the hope that the contributions of countries where respect for age, traditional values, justice and human dignity were evident would influence the working atmosphere of the Assembly. He had been much impressed by what he had seen in this respect in the countries he had visited during the past year.

62. The formulation of a strategy would have to be preceded by a reappraisal of attitudes towards aging. When this subject had been discussed during preparations for the Assembly, another broad distinction between developing and developed countries had often been mentioned, namely that, while in the developing countries the misery of aging was tempered by the care of relatives in the family and community, in the industrialized regions material safety and access to institutional care was provided only at the cost of personal and social marginalization, passivity and a sense of uselessness. There were indeed many contrasts between the ways in which old people were treated in different cultures. He mentioned the traditions of respect for and deference towards the elderly in Asia, the Middle East and other regions as well as the care for the old and frail in Africa and Latin America. This treatment often contrasted sharply with practice in the more developed countries. However, he continued, although older people in the industrialized countries were often rewarded for their life-long contributions to society with a social security pension and an invitation to leave their employment, a great number of old and retired people were able to enjoy the material security and the family support in forms other than physical co-habitation or material dependence. Public institutions and private individuals were becoming aware of the shortcomings of standardized retirement and social security arrangements.

63. At the same time, the traditional three-generation family was being eroded in the developing countries and it would, unfortunately, become even more weakened.

64. In conclusion he drew attention to the situation of the numerous least privileged elderly - the poorest, those displaced by war and civil strife, by migration and natural disasters, women without children or relatives, and he urged the participants in the Assembly to agree that the needs, expectations and challenges of aging were more important than cultural, social or political variations and to be willing to learn from each other.

65. Mrs. Leticia R. Shahani, Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, addressed the World Assembly. In her statement, she referred to the old as the fastest growing segment of the world's population. This trend was such that the mechanisms of aging were already deeply entrenched in some countries, both developed and developing, and were expected to become even more active in the near future. The aging of the world's population was so extensive that it was expected to lead to fundamentally different societies. Although methods of response to the challenge posed by the phenomenon of aging varied from region to region, from country to country, there were areas of common concern to both developed and developing countries. These needed to be identified as vital and compelling requirements for regional and international co-operation.

66. She noted that the deepening world-wide recession had already imperilled the economic and social plans of many countries. Policies adopted to deal with the dire situation, such as reductions of social welfare services, were likely to have the unfortunate consequence of most severely and adversely affecting the poor and the disadvantaged population groups, including a vast number of the elderly.

67. Member States of the United Nations, in accepting the principle aim of development as declared in the Strategy for the Third Development Decade, had made a firm commitment to human-oriented development: recognition of the human being as both agent and beneficiary of development. She pointed out that, while economic development was a major concern to all countries, those development efforts which did not sufficiently take into account the human element often did not benefit the majority of the population. Accordingly she expressed the hope that the World Assembly would approach the question of aging within both an humanitarian and developmental context. She noted that the significant and accelerating changes in technologies, organizations and modernization, all touched the lives of the elderly, affecting the relationship of their familiar habitats and environments as well as their families. She stressed that social change, which was occurring so rapidly in all regions of the world, had serious implications for the roles, continuing participation and socio-economic contribution of older persons.

68. With reference to the statement by the Director-General for Development and International Co-operation on behalf of the Secretary-General that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was committed to the question of aging and would make every effort to ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of this historic Assembly were effectively implemented, she drew attention to the fact that the Centre had been the focal point within the United Nations system for the co-ordination of activities related to the subject of aging. The Centre had acted as a central promoting body in the United Nations system and in the international community to stimulate interest and prompt action leading to the amelioration of the situation of the aging. Over the years, the Centre had been involved in a number of important activities designed to promote a greater world-wide awareness of the special issues affecting the aging. In this connection, she noted that, on the one hand, the World Assembly was a culmination of the previous activities concerned with the phenomenon of aging, but on the other, it was only the beginning of the Centre's efforts in this area. The Centre was unique within the United Nations system in that it was exclusively oriented to the human dimension of development. The many programmes of the Centre, whether concerned with the advancement of women, social development, crime prevention and criminal justice, aging, youth or the disabled, were all related to the human and social aspects of development and their implications for the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

69. She expressed the appreciation of the Centre to the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations and to the community of non-governmental organizations for their contribution to the preparation of the World Assembly on Aging.

70. In conclusion, she affirmed that the Centre stood ready to implement the recommendations and the International Plan of Action resulting from the Assembly, and pledged to do her utmost in this regard.

B. Main points from statements by delegations in the general debate

71. In the ensuing debate, the opinion was very generally expressed that the competent bodies of the United Nations had taken a welcome initiative in deciding to convene the World Assembly on Aging for the purpose of considering the almost world-wide phenomenon of a radical change in demographic structure in modern times. The World Assembly constituted the first global intergovernmental forum called upon to take stock of the existing situation attributable to the profound transformation which had occurred in the distribution of the age groups in the population of virtually every country and to weigh the implications of these changes and of those foreseeable in the coming decades.

72. The speakers in the general debate recognized well-nigh unanimously that the alteration in the "pyramid" of age groups had produced or would produce far-reaching consequences in the economic and social life of countries, that its effect would continue to be felt in the future medium term and long term and that action at the national and international level would be needed in order to forestall or palliate any adverse impact of these changes on individuals, communities and nations. Accordingly, the World Assembly was described as a welcome and timely opportunity for the representatives of countries in different regions and with different economic and social systems to consult together with a view to working out the text of an international plan that would recommend to the attention of Governments a set of co-ordinated measures for dealing with the phenomenon of aging societies at the various levels.

73. The phenomenon of aging, in the sense of greater average longevity, observable in nearly all countries and regions was attributed to various causes by speakers in the general debate. First and foremost, they cited the advances of medical science in modern times, the improvement and extensions of the public health services, better hygiene and the more generalized spread of welfare services. Other contributory causes of the rise in life expectancy were improved nutrition, improved housing, increased educational opportunities and generally the provision of the amenities of life on a larger scale than in earlier generations. At the same time it was realized that, while the trend towards a longer lifespan was practically universal, vast differences separated the situation in developed countries from that in the developing countries. In statistical terms, whereas in some industrialized countries as much as a fifth of the total population was accounted for by persons over the age of 60 years, in a number of developing countries this age group accounted for barely 5 per cent of the population. Hence, it was stated, the measures to be recommended in the plan of action would need to be sufficiently varied and flexible to allow for application in these diverse circumstances. Attention was drawn, furthermore, to the differences in demographic structure between the urban and the rural environment, particularly in developing countries.

74. It was pointed out that in many countries, notably the industrialized States, the change in the age structure of the population in recent times was a result of the simultaneously occurring decline in the birth rate and the decline in the mortality rate, or the progressively lengthening lifespan. Many of the Governments concerned had adjusted national economic plans, pension schemes, welfare services and educational systems accordingly, and it was expected that other adjustments would become necessary in the light of the future evolution of demographic trends.

75. In many countries, these adaptations entailed heavy expenditure of public funds. Many delegations pointed out that the additional burden was being imposed on the State budget at a time of world-wide recession characterized by widespread unemployment, under-employment, under-utilization of industrial capacity and inflation. In their opinion, the most difficult task for national policy-makers and for the international community was to reconcile the demands of economic recovery with the steadily rising claims for welfare and other social services in the aging societies. They stressed however, that the right of the older citizens to basic economic security ought to be guaranteed, for they had earned that right through the work they had contributed to the national economy during their active life.

76. Some delegations expressed the view that the Plan of Action should not merely attract the attention of Governments but should stress the need for profound changes in international economic relations. In view of the existing imbalances between the economic situations of developing and developed countries, they considered that the problems of the old, as well as of women, children, the disabled and the population as a whole could only be effectively and completely resolved with the establishment of the new international economic order and in consonance with the objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

77. Many delegations pointed out that the Assembly was meeting against the sombre background of a worsening political, social and economic international situation which was bound to affect its deliberations. For, they said, the topic of aging could not be considered in isolation from the brutal realities of the conflicts which were raging in certain countries and regions and of which the older segments of the population were victims no less - and perhaps even more grievously affected - than the young. They urged the Assembly to add its voice to the appeals made in other international gatherings and by distinguished personalities in favour of peace and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, in favour of an end to the arms race and of genuine disarmament. They stressed that only in a setting of genuine international peace and détente would Governments be able to devote to the strengthening and improvement of the services needed by the older population resources which were at present spent on military and defence purposes. The resources released by the cessation of the arms race if applied to social purposes would, they considered, go a long way towards enhancing the quality of life of the entire population, including the aged. They added that the aged, being more vulnerable, also tended to suffer more than others from the effects of colonialism, neocolonialism, racism and foreign intervention, aggression and occupation, and they considered that the Assembly should call for the elimination of these odious vestiges of the past.

78. Many delegations referred to the plight of elderly persons affected by armed conflict in various regions. They mentioned in particular the suffering of the civilian population, including many aged persons in the beleaguered city of Beirut, and they urged the Assembly to make a strong plea on behalf of innocent, defenceless victims of violence in Lebanon who were living under conditions of siege and privation. These conditions, they said, were bound to inflict physical harm and mental anguish especially on the most vulnerable segment of the resident population - the aged.

79. A number of representatives drew attention to the growing disproportion in the distribution of the sexes among the older generation, particularly though not

solely in industrialized countries. According to certain forecasts, they said, among the older population women would outnumber men in ratios that varied from region to region but that for the over-80s age group might rise to as high as almost 2:1 in certain societies. It was stressed that, in view of this prospective trend, special policies would need to be worked out at the national and local levels for the purpose of providing appropriate services and dwellings for the larger numbers of old women, many of whom would be living alone. It was realized at the same time that the situation would not be the same in rural as in urban settings, nor in developed as in developing countries, and that consequently it was the responsibility of each State and its Government to devise the systems of services most in keeping with local conditions and within the scope of its resources.

80. In some countries, it was pointed out, the family or voluntary philanthropic bodies acted as the principal providers of care for the old. The authorities had a statutory duty to provide services and to support services by voluntary organizations. In each case, the State had a duty to ensure that persons in its territory were safeguarded against discrimination by reason of age or sex.

81. One of the many consequences of the dramatic change in the demographic structure was said to be that affecting the relations between generations. Traditionally, the family was the stable unit of society and relations between old and young within that unit were governed by convention and custom. As a result of progressive industrialization and urbanization the stability of society had been shaken in many countries, the scale of values had altered, the size of families had shrunk, the economic functions within the family had been redistributed and very often members of the family had been dispersed. In many cases the young were now receiving an education that differed fundamentally from that received by earlier generations. The result frequently observed was an inter-generational gap in the perception of the roles of young and old which was on occasion manifested in a lack of understanding between them. Accordingly, in the opinion of many speakers it had become more important than before to make a conscious and deliberate effort to teach the public about the dignity attaching to age, to inculcate an attitude of comprehension and respect for older persons, to enlist the participation of the elderly to the fullest possible extent in societal activities and, conversely, to enlighten the old about the preoccupations of the young in a troubled world. Participation of the elderly should include their participation in policy preparation and implementation at all levels. It was urged that the resources of the mass media should be mobilized to contribute to the achievement of these purposes.

82. Many representatives referred to the migratory movements, both within national boundaries and across international frontiers, that had altered the pattern of human settlements and the age composition of their population. In many countries, developed and developing alike, the exodus from the countryside to the cities had left behind a predominantly aging society deprived of the support of the young and often far removed from essential services. The same movements had swelled the urban population often to excessive dimensions and strained the capacity of the municipal and other authorities to provide services for the old, particularly as these authorities had an equal duty to provide educational, health and other services for the young in the cities.

83. The speakers described how their countries were endeavouring to satisfy the competing demands of the rural and urban communities, and of young and old, even in times of economic difficulties. Several delegations mentioned the contribution

made by voluntary bodies to redress some of the imbalances in the distribution of the population by the provision of certain social welfare services in their countries; in some cases dwellings specially designed for older persons were built by voluntary or co-operative effort or with the support of fiscal incentives. Reference was made also to the circumstances of the older members of families that had moved abroad in search of employment or for other reasons.

84. Some delegations considered that admission into homes for elderly people was only justified if community services could not enable the aged to maintain an independent way of life in their own dwellings. A number of delegations mentioned that alternatives to institutional care for the elderly were being sought. Examples mentioned included home care, sometimes by volunteers, open-care, out-patient services and compensation to neighbours or relatives for the care of the elderly in their own homes. In addition, it was stressed that health-care facilities should be easily accessible to the elderly: the social services, not the elderly, should be required to be mobile and flexible.

85. A number of delegations stressed the importance of volunteer programmes. Several countries mobilized youth for social services for the elderly and offered the chance to replace military service by community service, which also served to reduce institutional rigidity. Some delegations pointed out the importance of home visiting services to provide companionship for the elderly and involve them in the life of the community. Clubs or community centres for the aging were found in a number of countries, as well as day-care centres where the elderly could meet, were provided with meals, could participate in physiotherapy or could do some work for extra income.

86. Among the factors taken into account in the social policies and planning of many of the countries which made special provision for their aging population, the representatives concerned referred inter alia to the distance between residential areas and health care facilities; proximity to employment and education; the provision of homes suitable for persons with physical disabilities. Housing, it was stressed, should be provided in accordance with the national and local economic and cultural situation, to preserve the independence of the elderly who, in some countries, often had to make do with substandard housing. The aged should not be considered as a homogeneous entity, since their age group comprised individuals of great diversity. Persons of very advanced age deserved special attention as regards housing. Some delegations stated that as part of the public housing programme, special housing facilities were built for the elderly in their countries. Other delegations pointed to the dangers of creating old people's ghettos and considered that dwellings for the elderly should be integrated within the community. Several representatives considered that the architectural design of family homes and housing projects should also take into account the need for accommodation of the aging as part of the extended family.

87. As regards the methods employed in different countries for dispensing social services to the citizens and residents, the representatives explained the diversity of national systems. In many countries, the responsibility for providing care and attention to the old or the sick was entrusted to official bodies at various administrative levels (central, regional or local). These bodies employed professional workers who had been trained in the various disciplines of social services. These professional workers were in many cases members of associations or trade unions and their remuneration was governed by the scales applicable to public servants. In other countries, it was reported, reliance for the provision of social

services was placed largely on voluntary bodies, and in yet other countries the professional bodies were supported or supplemented by voluntary or charitable bodies, which might be lay or denominational. Several representatives stressed that the voluntary bodies in their countries performed a very useful function in that they were in close personal contact with their "clients" and their environment, and hence were able to give them a sense of security and were alert to any risk of a worsening of the situation of the old persons for whom they cared.

88. A number of delegations referred to the legal position of the elderly in their countries. In some countries special legislation had been enacted giving specific rights or privileges to persons over the age of retirement, additional to the rights enjoyed by all citizens. Examples cited were legislative provisions granting special fiscal concessions to persons over a certain age, provisions prohibiting discrimination based on age, and provisions concerning negotiations by associations of old persons with the civic authorities about the application of funds appropriated in the national budget for the specific benefit of the old. Other delegations referred to the powerful influence of custom - often more binding than legislation - which accorded to the older members of the community great respect and deference and inculcated in the young a feeling of affection and esteem for their elders.

89. The representatives of States that follow the Islamic tradition emphasized the humanitarian considerations inspiring daily life in their countries. In conformity with that tradition, the aging and the elderly were treated with the utmost respect in their families and communities, as were the poor and the disadvantaged, the infirm and the disabled. In many of the countries concerned, they said, legislation had been enacted which provided for measures supplementing or reinforcing the charitable and voluntary activities on behalf of the aged carried on by private or religious institutions.

90. The national systems of retirement benefits and the age and other qualifications which made persons eligible for these benefits in their countries were described by nearly all the representatives who took the floor in the general debate. In some countries, the age of retirement varied as between women and men, very commonly the age limit being 60 for the former and 65 for the latter. In other countries - notably those of Eastern Europe - the age limits were 55 and 60 respectively, though the persons concerned were free to continue in active full-time or part-time service if they so wished. In yet other countries there was provision for optional retirement with benefits, after the completion of a specified number of years of service; and in a few countries the rules governing retirement and pension benefits had been revised recently to enable those persons who so wished to continue in active employment beyond the age of 60 or 65 (as the case may be) and in that way to earn higher pension benefits for their eventual retirement. The representatives also gave particulars of the amount of pension payments, which in most cases depended on the number of years of service, the final remuneration and, to some extent, on the personal circumstances of the pensioner (e.g. number of dependants, disability or invalidity). Some delegations reported that in their countries retirement pensions were exempt from taxation; others indicated that pension benefits were eligible for concessional treatment in their countries' fiscal régime.

91. Reference was made to the diversity of pension schemes and to the extent of coverage provided by these schemes. In some countries, it was explained, pension schemes were private, contributions being payable by both employer and employee,

and the pension funds were administered by trustees. In many other countries, pension schemes were managed by the State or other public authorities (local, regional, provincial etc.). In yet other countries public social security and private pension schemes existed side by side, and it was open to the citizen to supplement prospective benefits under the public scheme (to which contributions were usually compulsory) by making contributions to a private scheme. It was pointed out that owing to the erosion of monetary values by prolonged inflation, the financial situation of the private pension funds had been impaired in some cases and, furthermore, the benefits paid out by these funds had not kept pace with the rise in the cost of living. As a result, in some countries certain groups of retired people (women, migrant workers) were experiencing hardship and the State had to intervene to relieve their condition. Several representatives reported that in their countries a system of indexation had been introduced in order to safeguard the standard of living of pensioners. In any case, in many countries a minimum basic pension was guaranteed to the elderly by the State.

92. Many delegations stated that there should be greater awareness of the situation of elderly women, who represented the majority of the world's aged, because they had longer life expectancies than men, and who, in some countries, were subject to social and economic discrimination. Some delegations pointed to the lower pensions women received, usually as a result of the discrimination in the remuneration for female employment. Examples of other forms of discrimination cited included a reduction in pension provided to a woman after the death of her spouse and a refusal by certain trade unions to agree to prolong the age of retirement for women employees. Some delegations noted that older women were socially disadvantaged because they usually worked in the home and did not earn pension benefits during their active life. It was pointed out, however, that in other countries women enjoyed equality of rights with men and thus older women were not a disadvantaged group.

93. One delegation mentioned that in 1985, at the close of the United Nations Decade for Women, countries would have the opportunity to report to the third United Nations Conference on Women on the measures taken to alleviate the plight of elderly women.

94. Reference was made frequently to the contribution which older people could make, and in many cases were making, to society. The representatives who spoke on this point said that while society had a duty to maintain the elderly who were in need of support, it should not neglect the possibilities of mobilizing and benefiting from the intellectual and cultural resources of the old. The older members of a community were often the bearers of tradition and the transmitters of cultural values and in that capacity performed a useful function and retained a sense of belonging to society and sharing in its life. Many representatives described the part played by the older citizens in their countries on these lines, and stated that experience had shown the value of the integration or reintegration of the older members in society. The aging were a valuable resource, whose physical and mental capabilities could be used in a number of areas: examples were given of voluntary work performed by the aging at the community level. However, if the elderly were to have the opportunity to play the active role of which they were capable, it was necessary for society to provide them with the services and facilities which helped them to remain physically active and mentally alert.

95. A number of speakers drew attention to the contrast between the earlier view of the onset of old age as the commencement of a decline, of a failing of mental and physical powers, and the more recent view of the over-60 generation as a useful

element of society. Aging should no longer be regarded as a disease: thanks to the achievements of medical science and to social welfare services the point at which the human being began the decline - which was the inevitable destiny of all - could be postponed for many years. And the longer a person could avoid becoming a dependant (whether on the family or on the State), the longer would that person retain a sense of self-assurance, self-reliance and individuality and avoid the feeling of uselessness and isolation which had been experienced by the elderly in the past. Many representatives referred to research being carried out in their countries to determine the physical and psychological factors responsible for the process of aging and for variations in that process as between individuals and as between the sexes. Some representatives said that geriatrics and gerontology would probably become leading fields of scientific research in the future.

96. The situation of the elderly in the labour market was the subject of many comments in the general debate. Many speakers considered that the age of retirement laid down by the existing law in their countries was no longer consistent with the physical or intellectual capacity of persons at that age, for thanks to the greatly improved health care and a greater consciousness of physical fitness many persons retained the full use of their faculties and skill beyond this age. Such persons should, it was felt, be able to remain in productive employment or occupation, and accordingly these representatives advocated a liberalization or abolition of the mandatory age limit embodied in the labour legislation. Other representatives took the view, however, that modern industry tended to prefer young employees familiar with the modern technology and processes of production, and that for this reason the age limit should be retained or even lowered in order to allow for the entry of new recruits into the labour market to replace those who retired. It was stated that each country would have to take account of internal conditions of unemployment or under-employment, as well as of its financial situation and of that of the national or other pension funds in reaching a decision on this matter.

97. Some delegations stated that in their countries the Constitution provided for all citizens the right to material security in old age, which was guaranteed by the payment of old-age pensions at the expense of the State. The Labour Code of their countries provided not only for special protection to be accorded to working persons advanced in age but also for the creation of places of employment suited to the specific needs of older persons. In their countries, the elderly enjoyed free health care, paid for by the State, and other benefits relating to their leisure time and to transport and to rental of dwellings.

98. One representative expressed the view that, in calling for favourable treatment of the elderly, one ought not to overlook the interests of the younger generation.

99. The psychological effects of retirement were mentioned by many delegations. Without adequate preparation for retirement, the elderly became withdrawn and felt useless; one delegation referred to what it described as a virtual social "euthanasia" associated with retirement - the transition from separation to isolation. A number of delegations said that their countries had adopted measures to ease the transition from economic activity to retirement, such as making the retirement age flexible, gradually lessening the number of hours in the work week as a person approached retirement age, or part-time work.

100. The representative of Malta stated that, as a contribution to regional co-operation in the matter of research and training in the practical aspects of the process of aging, his Government was willing to offer a site in Malta for the

establishment of a centre which would train workers concerned with the welfare of the elderly and gather and disseminate relevant information. The work of the centre would be concentrated in the first place on the Mediterranean region, but the scope of its activities might eventually be extended.

101. Several delegations stated that a national "Day for the Aging" had been designated in their countries and that the "Day" would be useful in promoting a better understanding of the problems of the aging. Some of them indicated that it was envisaged to fix the date for the observance of the "Day" as 26 July, the anniversary of the opening of the World Assembly.

102. Some delegations observed that in the countries in which the rules of the traditional extended family still made it possible for the great majority of the elderly to be looked after and respected by their families the best way of improving the situation of the elderly would be to strengthen national and international efforts for raising the general standard of living of the population, specially in the rural areas.

103. The desirability of international co-operation with a view to improving the quality of the data base relating to the elderly was mentioned by many delegations. They stressed the importance of the exchange of information and experience at international level, and of education and training in the specialized fields of gerontology and geriatrics, as well as of education and training or professionalization of practitioners to provide services to the aging - both within and outside an institutional setting.

104. A number of representatives considered that it was appropriate that the Assembly's plan of action should be international in scope, for some of the ills associated with old age were also international in origin, in the sense that they were caused by the prevailing unjust world economic order. As a result, they said, old people in many of the developing countries were suffering from deprivation, hunger and disease, whereas in the more affluent countries the aged, though not perhaps denied material comforts, were affected by a sense of solitude and abandonment.

105. Attention was drawn by many delegations to the dearth of information about the phenomenon of aging, its repercussions on the national and international economies and its effects on the political fabric of nations. The sporadic gathering of scattered data should be replaced by the systematic world-wide collection of relevant data, a function that might be entrusted to the competent services of the United Nations, including the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, and the specialized agencies concerned. Concerted technical research might be carried out by the appropriate organizations of the United Nations family into the position and treatment of old persons in society. In that way, the International Plan of Action might become an instrument of truly international action. In this context, many delegations stressed the importance of the implementation of the International Plan of Action in ways which the individual countries considered appropriate.

106. The representatives of several developing countries emphasized the distinction between the demographic features of the aging population in the developed and in the developing countries. While in the developed countries the proportion of the aged in the total population varied from 15 to 20 per cent, in the developing countries the proportion ranged from 4 to 8 per cent. The same trend was likely to continue until the year 2000.

107. One delegation welcomed the fact that several countries had contributed to the United Nations Trust Fund for the World Assembly, clearly indicating the willingness to co-operate in developing an international plan of action.

108. However, another delegation stated that, since several United Nations organizations already dealt with technical co-operation, there was no need for any special fund for technical co-operation as regards the subject of aging. The mandate for the existing Trust Fund should not be prolonged or changed to create a fund for technical co-operation activities. Any surplus in the Fund, it was suggested, should be put at the disposal of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and used for post-Assembly activities in conformity with the Plan of Action, or else transferred directly to UNDP. Another possibility mentioned by one delegation was that of converting the existing Trust Fund into a permanent fund to support the efforts of the developing countries - in particular the least developed among them - on behalf of the aged.

109. As regards action to be taken at the international level to give effect to the recommendations of the International Plan of Action on Aging, some delegations expressed the view that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should act as the focal point in the United Nations system for co-ordinating the activities carried on within the system that were concerned with the phenomenon of aging and that were entrusted to it by the Plan. For that purpose, they considered, the Centre should be strengthened. Furthermore, the Centre should co-operate with organizations of the United Nations family in activities of a technical nature arising out of the Plan of Action; reference was made in this connection to the support that might be provided by UNDP. Reference was also made to the contribution that might be made to such activities by ILO, UNESCO, WHO, FAO and UNFPA within the scope of their competence.

C. Summaries of statements by representatives of organizations in the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

110. Mr. Shuaib Yolah, Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, addressing the World Assembly, stated that in just half a century, during which the world's population of all ages was expected to double, the number of persons aged 60 or more would quadruple. Hence it was urgent that the international community should be fully equipped to deal with the social and humanitarian problems foreseeable in future years. He noted that there were a number of clichés concerning the aging that needed to be dispelled, such as the myth of aging itself. People aged differently; a person's chronological age might be a convenient but not necessarily accurate yardstick, which might even result in the unfair loss of work opportunities for many people. Perceptions of aging would have to change at a time when the world was faced with a serious economic crisis. It was imperative that special attention should be given to the plight of vulnerable groups at the time when policies were formulated for improving the economic situation. He emphasized that the United Nations stood for a human-oriented approach to development which, in addition to fostering economic growth, sought to give equal consideration to the human and social dimension of change. Recalling that 1975-1985 was the United Nations Decade for Women, he said that special efforts might be required for responding to the particular needs of older women in many societies. He assured the Assembly that his Department, which included the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, was ready to play its role in undertaking the tasks to be carried out in future to implement the Plan of Action and recommendations of the World Assembly as they may be approved by

the General Assembly of the United Nations. In this connection, he expressed his intention to work closely with organs of the United Nations system and the non-governmental organizations.

111. The representative of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America stated that ECLA had co-operated with the Secretariat of the World Assembly on Aging in preparations for the Assembly through a meeting of governmental experts, an intergovernmental regional preparatory meeting and a seminar bringing together representatives of governments and non-governmental organizations. In Latin America the study of the situation with regard to aging was new, since the population over the age of 60 years constituted a relatively small percentage of the total population. Nevertheless the development process had brought about a significant increase in the number of persons who reach 60 years of age, thus creating a challenge for the governments in order to meet their needs in the future. This task was made more difficult by the grave economic crisis shaking the world economy, whose repercussions in Latin America had included a reduction in resources devoted to social aspects of development. In order to meet the needs of the aging in Latin America, the Governments members of ECLA had adopted a regional plan of action emphasizing:

- (i) the integration of policy planning on aging into the national development plans;
- (ii) the recognition of the rights and obligations of the elderly;
- (iii) the recognition of the diversity within the sector of persons over 60;
- (iv) the compatibility of the right to employment and the right to a pension;
- (v) most importantly, the fundamental importance of the family as the basic social institution providing not only economic but also spiritual wellbeing for the elderly.

Within the resources at its disposal, ECLA offered its continued collaboration to the Secretariat and to Governments in the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging.

112. The representative of the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific stated that the issues of aging and the needs of the aged in the region were definable largely in terms of: rapid increase in the number of the elderly in the next few decades, who were expected to account for 52 per cent of the world's total population in the year 2000 and for 58 per cent of the total in the year 2025; limited resources for which many pressing developmental priorities competed; and accelerating socio-economic changes which tended to undermine traditional values and institutions favouring the elderly. The basic challenge for many countries of the region and for the Commission in the area of population was, therefore, to prepare and provide for the multifarious problems associated with or stemming from this phenomenon in ways which would not only solve the problems in question but also contribute to the attainment of the over-all development objectives of the countries in the region. The Commission, within the framework of the Regional Programme of Action on Aging endorsed by its 38th annual session and the International Plan of Action adopted by the World Assembly, would seek to assist its member countries in meeting this challenge through technical assistance, promotion of information exchange, provision of intergovernmental and/or export research, training, promotion of technical co-operation, and support of pilot projects.

113. The representative of the ILO said that many points of concern to the World Assembly, such as the status of older workers, retired people's resources and the effects of aging on social security systems, were akin to the subjects that the ILO was concerned with. Such problems were mainly to be found in the industrialized world. They were beginning to appear, however, in the developing countries where, for the most part, the only form of social protection available was still that afforded by the extended family. The ILO had adopted standards on all those topics, chiefly to do with social security; in 1980 it had approved a document specifically relating to older workers, Recommendation No. 162, which, guided by three principles - equal treatment irrespective of age, modification of working conditions and freedom of choice as to the date of retirement - proposed many courses of action to follow. Additionally, technical co-operation from the ILO had enabled many countries to take steps to safeguard old persons' incomes. The International Labour Office, which had been closely involved in the preparations for the Assembly, had submitted three technical papers dealing with problems of employment and occupation of older workers, the transition from working to retirement, and income security, respectively. The Office wished particularly to emphasize the importance, within the International Plan of Action which it would be glad to help put into effect, of the general recommendation on preparation for retirement and the specific recommendations relating to income and job security.

114. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations stated that the reason for FAO's special interest in the subject of aging was that most of the aged in developing countries formed part of the rural population which played a crucial role in agriculture and food production and which still suffered from low standards of living and poor nutrition. Owing to the adverse social, economic, health and environmental conditions prevailing in the rural areas, the rural population appeared to age prematurely. This was particularly true of women, for they began their reproductive life early, bore children at close intervals and simultaneously continued productive activities. Assistance to the aging could be channelled through many of the existing rural development programmes of the FAO, especially those concerned with nutrition, energy and integrated rural development. In all cases, because of the disproportionate number of women among the rural aged, special attention should be paid to their needs. The situation of the elderly in rural areas was discussed in detail in FAO's document contributed to the Assembly. Programmes for the elderly should not be undertaken in isolation from other sectors of the population, lest the generation gap be widened. Accordingly, Member States, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies were called upon to mobilize more resources for integrated rural development that would take the aged into account.

115. The representative of the Director General of UNESCO stated that in its various fields of competence UNESCO had a role to play in addressing the questions associated with the aged and aging. He drew attention to the need for programmes of continuing education adapted to the needs of the elderly in order that they should be able both to adapt to the inexorable changes taking place in their societies and to enjoy their right to lifelong personal growth and enrichment. He suggested that life should no longer be viewed as sequential phases of education, work, and leisure but that these should be interwoven, in varying proportions, throughout life. Furthermore, he stressed that the elderly should be viewed not only as consumers of education but as valuable resources for the education of society, pointing out that in many societies the aged were both the repositories and the communicators of cultural values and traditions. After referring to UNESCO's past and current activities relating to the elderly, he indicated that, in

UNESCO's next Medium-Term Plan (1984-1989), increased attention would be given to this area and he urged representatives of Member States to co-ordinate the positions to be taken by their delegations to the forthcoming extraordinary session of UNESCO's General Conference with the positions they had taken at the World Assembly. Finally, he pledged UNESCO's co-operation in general with all who would be striving to implement the International Plan of Action on Aging.

116. The Director-General of the World Health Organization said that only a minority of people in the modern industrialized world failed to reach their seventieth birthday, surely a striking achievement. WHO's Member States were now attempting to achieve the same by the year 2000 for all new-born children in the world. That effort was popularly known as "Health for All by the Year 2000". Living to a ripe old age should be seen as a triumph of the human species, but like all triumphs it carried with it its own problems. The problems were worldwide. Developing countries would have to face them no less than developed ones. In 1980, more than half of the world's 260 million elderly aged 65 and over had been living in developed countries, but by the year 2000 almost three-fifths of the world's 400 million elderly would be in developing countries. The elderly were especially vulnerable as regards their health, which WHO defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely as the absence of disease or infirmity. The health needs of the elderly were broad and, like those of all other people, had to be provided for by joint action in a number of social and economic sectors. The present Assembly was taking place in an environment of gloom concerning the world economic situation. Yet the member States of WHO dared to have an optimistic vision of the world in the year 2000, and their aspirations for improving the well-being and quality of life of the world's aging were set within this hope and expectation.

117. The representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees stated that of the nearly 10 million refugees in the world 3 per cent or some 300,000 were aged 60 and over. They suffered from physical and mental afflictions endemic to their age. While a majority lived with their families, a sizeable number were alone and suffered from loneliness and poverty. Though they had been in their countries of asylum for many years, circumstances had prevented them from being integrated. The High Commissioner's response had been twofold: providing assistance for immediate and short-term relief and promotion of durable solutions in the form of voluntary repatriation where circumstances permitted, integration in the country of asylum, or resettlement in a third country. The High Commissioner's activities on behalf of elderly refugees were intended to ensure their physical, psychological, social and economic security. The High Commissioner's Office had assisted in the establishment of "Homes" for the aged in several countries, made arrangements for the payment of annuities and other assistance to meet their needs. The Office also promoted resettlement under various arrangements. It had designated a focal point to study the needs of elderly refugees with a view to developing a systematic global programme for their benefit. The elderly refugees also needed access, without discrimination, to available services at the national level. The High Commissioner's Office hoped to receive the co-operation and support of the international community in carrying out its mandate on behalf of elderly refugees, among others.

118. The representative of the United Nations Development Programme said that UNDP, the largest multilateral financial institution supporting technical co-operation, was ready to make a contribution to the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging in the context of its activities in furtherance of economic and

social development. UNDP's financial support to technical co-operation was multidisciplinary and related to all economic and social sectors. The use of UNDP's resources was determined by the Governments of the recipient countries in the light of their development priorities and objectives. Given the complexity of the needs of the aging population and the commonly used system for sectoral classification in technical co-operation, it was not easy to identify UNDP-financed projects which were primarily or exclusively oriented to meet the needs of the elderly population. Hence, it was difficult to make an accurate estimate in financial terms of the magnitude of UNDP's contribution. However, on the basis of available information, it was estimated that UNDP's contribution was above \$US 10 million for projects concerned with old age benefits, social security, etc. A great many projects in such areas as health and nutrition, education, agriculture and rural development, etc. had an impact on the lives and productivity of the elderly, and the financial magnitude of this effort, while difficult to isolate, would be in the order of hundreds of millions of dollars. He pointed out, however, that the activities of UNDP depended on the funds provided by voluntary contributions and that these had recently fallen short of expectations. The uncertainty and unpredictability of UNDP resources represented the basic constraints reflecting negatively on the whole system genuinely interested in and dedicated to multilateral development aid. He urged Governments to contribute generously to the funds of UNDP.

119. The Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) stated that the aging of populations was the consequent phenomenon of the demographic transition - the reduction of fertility and the prolongation of life expectancy. Among the demographic characteristics of the aged that had social and economic implications, the extremely old and the sex composition and urban-rural distribution of the population needed special attention. One of the most important issues facing both developed and developing countries was how to ensure that, in the process of industrialization, urbanization and accompanying social change, the valuable aspects of village and extended family life were not lost. In this respect, the less developed countries might be able to offer valuable insights to the industrialized countries for discovering the dynamics which would permit the full participation of older people in all activities of the community and the means of integrating them into the social change occurring under modern conditions. The role of concerned international agencies should be to act as collaborators between the Governments and peoples of those countries needing assistance and those able to give it, and as transmitters of ideas and as arousers of concern. UNFPA's agenda for the future might include, as appropriate: basic data collection; research into a country's changing age structure and implications for labour supply and for social services; collaboration with concerned institutions, including non-governmental organizations; and consultations concerning policy. In August 1984, an International Conference on Population would be held. That Conference would offer an opportunity to assess the achievements in the field of population in the preceding decade and give new directions for the next decades on the integration of population with development. As Secretary-General of the forthcoming Conference, he assured the Assembly that aging would be on its agenda and that proper consideration would be given to the recommendations made by the World Assembly.

120. The representative of the Commission of the European Community stated that the question of aging was a question not of physical deterioration but of psychological decay. What had to be done was to change attitudes, to change the way people thought of the aged. The idea of placing employment within a short span of years

had to be altered, both at the phase of entering employment and at the retiring end. There was no common European Community policy regarding the aged nor regarding the family. However, it was quite clear that a range of problems converged among the Member States. Common action was, therefore, called for, within the wide range of social policies. The Commission had made recommendations specifically in the area of flexible retirement. They were under consideration in Member States. In industrialized countries, a revolution was in progress as a result of increased longevity. The working population was decreasing, with a number of workers thrust out of the work force before retirement age. As a result of automation moreover, the working population would decrease even further. In those circumstances, there had to be a change in the concept of retirement altogether. It would no longer be an unusual state but one common to a large segment of society. In the field of health, the Commission's policy was limited to hygiene. In the future, however, more emphasis would be placed on improving the health of and services for the elderly. The Commission would pursue its function in urging reluctant Governments to adopt useful policies for the aging.

121. The representative of the League of Arab States made a statement in which he referred more specifically to the situation of the aged in the Arab world and described the care accorded to them. He stressed that the Arab-Islamic heritage and Islamic values had played a fundamental role in guiding the Arab nation in its mutual support and solidarity against the violent jolts which had shaken the world as a result of the onslaughts of development and modernization. After mentioning briefly the efforts being made by the League's Office of Social Work on behalf of the aged, he turned to the situation of the aged in Lebanon and emphasized the tragedy suffered by this population group as a result of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and its capital, Beirut. He called upon all delegations participating in the World Assembly to condemn strongly the inhumane and criminal Israeli aggression against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples and to support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and its legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

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122. At the 15th plenary meeting on 5 August 1982 the representative of Malaysia, on behalf of Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Aging people in Lebanon" (A/CONF.113/L.3). The following countries joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Bulgaria, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Mali, Nicaragua, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Yugoslavia. The sponsors revised operative paragraph 1 by adding the words "among innocent victims" after the word "casualties", and operative paragraph 4 by adding the words "and dispersed" after the word "extended". In addition, the representative of Malaysia said that the words "38th session" in operative paragraph 5 should be corrected to read "37th session".

123. A request was made for a roll-call vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/CONF.113/L.3 entitled "Aging people in Lebanon" as revised by the sponsors. Before the draft resolution was put to the vote, statements were made in explanation of their votes by the representatives of Norway (speaking also on behalf of the representatives of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden), Switzerland, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Belgium, Netherlands, Australia (speaking also on behalf of the representative of New Zealand) and the Holy See.

124. The representative of Norway stated that the Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden - would abstain in the vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/CONF.113/L.3. In the opinion of the Nordic countries, the draft resolution dealt with a political question which clearly fell outside the mandate of the World Assembly on Aging. The position taken by the Nordic countries was one of principle, namely that questions of a political nature should only be dealt with by the appropriate fora of the United Nations. Therefore, their abstention did not reflect their opinion on the substance of the draft resolution. The Security Council, as the competent organ of the United Nations, had dealt with and continued to be seized with the situation in Lebanon. The Nordic countries fully supported the decisions taken by the Council, and would particularly stress the need to end the immense sufferings inflicted upon the civilian population by the Israeli invasion.

125. The representative of Switzerland stated that the Swiss delegation wished to express in the World Assembly the keen concern of the Swiss authorities with regard to the situation in Lebanon and the sufferings of innocent victims. The Swiss delegation wished also to draw attention to the need for all belligerents to respect the rules of humanitarian law. At the same time, while appreciating the humanitarian motives underlying some of the paragraphs of draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3, the Swiss delegation would abstain in the vote on the draft resolution, for it considered that the draft resolution was not within the scope of the World Assembly and that some of the questions raised were not within its competence.

126. The representative of Israel, announcing that he would vote against draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3, stated that the draft resolution was discriminatory against many groups of elderly refugees, who were relegated by the international community to a forgotten and neglected state. There were other areas of conflict in addition to the one in Lebanon. This draft resolution selected only one category of elderly refugees for the attention of the Assembly. There were elderly refugees suffering in South-East Asia, in Iran, in Iraq, in Ethiopia, in Somalia, in the Sahara and in and from Afghanistan. Why should this Assembly be indifferent to their suffering? Why did they not merit even to be mentioned by the Assembly? Should one group of elderly refugees be more equal than others, many of whom had escaped from the ravages of war in their respective countries, and many of whom were not treated as equally as some others? He called upon delegations to reject the draft resolution, because it was harmful for the cause of the elderly, because it was based on untruth, and was unjust towards Israel, and because it discriminated against many other groups of elderly refugees in dire need of sympathy and help from this Assembly.

127. The representative of Belgium stated that the Belgian delegation would abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3. It considered that the World Assembly was not competent to deal with the questions raised in the draft resolution. It associated itself with the suffering of the Lebanese people and of the Palestinians. It condemned the Israeli action in Lebanon. He added that the draft resolution was unsatisfactory or obscure in many respects, and several of its paragraphs, notably paragraphs 1, 3 and 4, were unsound in law.

128. The representative of the Netherlands stated that the Netherlands Government had already expressed its grave concern over the Israeli invasion into Lebanon and its consequences, both political and in the humanitarian field. The Netherlands delegation realized that under the circumstances now prevailing in Lebanon, and in

particular in Beirut, the plight of elderly people - and that of other vulnerable groups was particularly harsh. But, he asked, "Is this World Assembly then indifferent to all those cases elsewhere in the world, except to those in Lebanon? Why is this Assembly focusing on only one case of severe sufferings?" The Netherlands delegation had hoped that the resolution would be drafted to express the all-embracing compassion of the participants for the particular affliction of the aging in all contemptible situations. The hope had remained unanswered. It was consequently clear that the draft resolution, which was of a selective political nature, should not be dealt with in the World Assembly but in other fora. For example, the Security Council had adopted, on 29 July 1982, resolution 515 on the situation of the civilian population in Lebanon, which included a strong reference to the humanitarian principles of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. It was for these reasons that the Netherlands delegation would abstain in the vote and was unable to support the resolution as contained in document A/CONF.113/L.3.

129. The representative of Australia, speaking also on behalf of the representative of New Zealand, stated that the delegations of these two countries would abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3, because of their conviction that it was outside the mandate of the World Assembly. Their abstention would reflect their view that the World Assembly should concentrate on its proper and important business and not on particular political issues. The position of principle which the two delegations were taking was without prejudice to their grave concern over the issues being addressed in the Security Council.

130. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland stated that, while the United Kingdom delegation sympathized with the humanitarian aims of the draft resolution in document A/CONF.113/L.3, it did not consider the World Assembly on Aging an appropriate forum in which to discuss the situation in Lebanon. The United Kingdom delegation would, therefore, abstain in the vote on this draft resolution.

131. A vote was taken by roll-call on draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3 as amended by its sponsors. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against: Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Guatemala, Haiti, Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Liberia, Luxembourg, Netherlands,

New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

132. There were 73 votes in favour, 2 against and 26 abstentions. The draft resolution was adopted. For the text see chapter VI below, resolution 1.

133. After the vote, statements in explanation of their votes were made by the representatives of Spain, Federal Republic of Germany, Chile, Ireland, Costa Rica, United Republic of Cameroon, Austria, Canada, France, Japan, United States of America, Italy, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Greece and Guatemala.

134. The representative of Spain stated that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3 by reason of its humanitarian content and in conformity with Spain's policy of favouring the elderly and of sparing them suffering. In this sense, Spain had taken humanitarian action by sending to Lebanon field tents and clothing, and food-stuffs for immediate use to a value of 200 million pesetas. In addition, it had remitted to UNRWA \$2 million - half of it in cash - in order to strengthen that Agency in these times of need. The Spanish UNICEF had sent medicaments, blood plasma and clothing to a value of 134 million pesetas. He stated that his delegation would have liked the resolution to refer to all the aged people who were suffering the horrors of war, but it considered that, while it was not possible to do everything, it would be wrong to fail to do at least something. Accordingly, the resolution just adopted, which called for the reunification of elderly families and which was moderate in character and consistent with the humanitarian principles of the Government and people of Spain, had received the support of the Spanish delegation.

135. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany stated that the World Assembly on Aging was a subject-oriented conference which, in his delegation's view, was not the right forum for the discussion of political questions like the situation in Lebanon. He regretted that by the resolution on Lebanon the Assembly had been politicized after it had succeeded during the entire phase of preparation to keep out non-related political matters. He considered that a resolution of the World Assembly that aimed only at the protection of one population group in an armed conflict seemed to make little sense. His delegation felt that the entire civilian population had to be protected. Furthermore, the preambular paragraphs of the resolution rather one-sidedly formulated a connection between the suffering of the civilian population in Lebanon and what the resolution called Israeli aggression. He pointed out that the Lebanese people suffered from a spiral of force that had begun not only with the Israeli invasion. In view of these considerations his delegation had abstained in the vote on this resolution.

136. The representative of Chile stated, with reference to the vote on the resolution just adopted, that Chile was a peace-loving country and hence in favour of the peaceful settlement of disputes. His delegation took the view that recourse to violence was inadmissible. That attitude was reflected in the statements and proposals made by the Chilean Minister of Foreign Affairs in many forums and in the General Assembly of the United Nations. That being so, Chile condemned the aggression against Lebanon. In recent days that aggression had aggravated the situation in the Middle East and had inflicted suffering on innocent civilians, including elderly persons. Even though Chile considered that the World Assembly on Aging was not the right forum for adopting a resolution of this kind, which was political in nature, the Chilean delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3 for humanitarian motives.

137. The representative of Ireland stated that Ireland had abstained in the vote just taken on the draft resolution on aging people in Lebanon contained in document A/CONF.113/L.3. The Irish delegation had not taken this position because of the substance of the resolution, nor did its vote reflect its view of the terrible events in Lebanon, which tragically still continued. Its attitude to these events was clear. Ireland had condemned the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and also Israeli non-compliance with Security Council resolution 509, which called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces forthwith and unconditionally from Lebanon. Nevertheless, the delegation of Ireland considered that the World Assembly on Aging was not the appropriate forum to consider issues which were clearly political and for this reason it felt obliged to abstain in the vote on the draft resolution.

138. The representative of Costa Rica stated that, as was right and proper, his country had recently, in the forum of the United Nations in New York, expressed its revulsion with respect to Israel's warlike action in Lebanon. The delegation of Costa Rica was concerned that so many human beings were dying on account of this illogical war, and it was even more disturbed by the daily reports of the anguish suffered by whole families, aged persons, women and children who were dying - as had been said in the World Assembly - as innocent and defenceless victims. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the delegation of Costa Rica the contents of document A/CONF/113/L.3 were not a subject for the World Assembly on Aging and strayed from the scope of the agenda which the Assembly was called upon to consider, and the very discussion of the draft resolution was out of keeping with the purpose of the Assembly. Because of these considerations the delegation of Costa Rica had abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3.

139. The representative of Austria stated that the Austrian delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/CONF/113/L.3 by reason of its primarily humanitarian aspects. It considered that the World Assembly could not ignore the plight of the people in Lebanon, especially the elderly. His delegation was deeply concerned about the vulnerability of civilians, in particular the elderly, in situations of armed conflicts wherever they occurred. It hoped that this highly important resolution, because of its wider political implications, would find appropriate consideration in the forthcoming sessions of the General Assembly.

140. The representative of Canada stated that Canada was in agreement with the over-all thrust of the draft resolution contained in document A/CONF.113/L.3 in that it believed it desirable to offer additional protection to aging persons both during periods of conflict and more generally in times of peace. However, this resolution inappropriately focused attention on a particular situation, to the exclusion of others, it introduced political issues which were beyond the mandate of the World Assembly, and it contained political judgements. Therefore, while supporting the general aim of the resolution, Canada, regrettably, had had to abstain. Its vote should in no way be interpreted as reflecting the position of Canada with regard to the conflict in Lebanon. Canada's concern for the tragic situation faced by that country and its civilian population had been expressed in appropriate United Nations fora.

141. The representative of France stated that the tragic situation of the elderly among other generations - in the areas of conflict was profoundly disquieting for France, whose delegation had spoken explicitly on the subject in the Security Council. The French delegation considered, however, that the World Assembly on Aging was not the right forum for discussing the subject. Accordingly, the French delegation had abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/CONF/113/L.3.

142. The representative of Japan stated that, although the Japanese delegation had voted for the draft resolution on the "Aging people in Lebanon", contained in document A/CONF.113/L.3, out of humanitarian consideration of the plight of the population in Lebanon, including particularly the aged, the Japanese delegation considered this World Assembly as not an appropriate forum to discuss this kind of political issue.

143. The representative of the United States of America, explaining his delegation's vote against draft resolution A/CONF/113/L.3, stated that the United States delegation shared the concern of other delegations at the injury and loss of life inflicted on innocent civilians by the current hostilities in Lebanon. Moreover, it fully appreciated the point that the elderly in situations of this kind were particularly vulnerable and deserved special attention. Nevertheless, it was the firm view of the United States delegation that politically-motivated resolutions should not be introduced into the deliberations of such bodies as the World Assembly on Aging. These issues were being dealt with elsewhere in the United Nations. Finally, he said that the resolution just voted upon was flawed by taking a wholly one-sided view of the tragic conflict in Lebanon.

144. The representative of the Dominican Republic stated that, being a peace-loving country and recognizing the need to safeguard the rights of the elderly, who were a more vulnerable segment of the world's population, the Dominican Republic had voted in favour of draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3. The delegation of the Dominican Republic would have preferred a broader resolution, tending to protect all the elderly in all armed conflicts at all times. In addition, the delegation had suggested that the resolution should make a recommendation concerning the protection of the elderly in cases of natural disasters. Not having succeeded in obtaining a broadening of the terms of the resolution in the way it would have liked, the delegation of the Dominican Republic had voted in favour for humanitarian reasons.

145. The representative of Greece stated that Greece shared the opinion, expressed by several distinguished delegates of other States in the World Assembly, that political problems must be dealt with within the appropriate United Nations fora, primarily the General Assembly and the Security Council. Nevertheless, the Greek delegation believed that the World Assembly was competent to consider issues relating to the fate of the elderly in time of warfare and armed conflict. As it had stated earlier, the Greek delegation wished that all delegations should consciously realize that political will and consistency were indispensable in order to secure for the aging the respect and assistance that they vitally needed, in peace as well as in war, and it had stressed the point particularly in these times, having fresh in memory the fate of the elderly refugees in Lebanon, in Palestine, in Cyprus and elsewhere in the world. He added that the resolution just adopted concerned only the situation in Lebanon. His delegation had accepted this focusing, having the greatest understanding for the plight of the Lebanese and Palestinian civilian population, particularly of the elderly, as well as for the urgency of their situation in Lebanon. The Greek delegation expressed the hope that the resolution would be acted upon by the General Assembly of the United Nations at the next session, where Member States which had not found it possible to vote for it would have ample opportunity to join Greece in supporting it.

146. The representatives of the Republic of Korea and of Zaire stated subsequently that, had they been present at the time of the vote, they would have voted in favour of draft resolution A/CONF.113/L.3.

Chapter IV

REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND ACTION ON THESE REPORTS BY THE WORLD ASSEMBLY

A. Report of the Main Committee

147. At its 1st plenary meeting on 26 July 1982 the World Assembly on Aging allocated to its Main Committee the following agenda items for consideration:

Aging and development: the developmental issues [5]

Aging and development: the humanitarian issues [6]

International plan of action on aging [7]

148. The Committee had before it the following documents:

Introductory document: demographic considerations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/4)

Introductory document: developmental issues

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/5)

Aging populations: economic policy considerations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/6)

Migration and aging

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/7)

Aging population and rural development

Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization (A/CONF.113/8)

Introductory document: humanitarian issues

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/9)

Aging in the context of the family

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/10)

Aging and social welfare

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/12)

Housing, environment and aging

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/13)

Social development and aging

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/14)

Problems of employment and occupation for older workers

Report of the International Labour Organisation (A/CONF.113/15)

Transitions between professional life and retirement

Report of the International Labour Organisation (A/CONF.113/16)

Income maintenance and social protection of the older person: Income security for the elderly

Report of the International Labour Organisation (A/CONF.113/17)

Income maintenance and social protection of older persons: The role of social security

Report of the International Labour Organisation (A/CONF.113/18 and Corr.2)

Health policy aspects of aging

Report of the World Health Organization (A/CONF.113/19)

Education and aging

Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (A/CONF.113/20)

The older refugees

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/CONF.113/21 and Add.1)

Draft international plan of action on aging

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/22)

Activities of the United Nations system on aging

Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/23)

Report of the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly on Aging on its third session (A/CONF.113/24)

Human settlements and the aging

Report of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (A/CONF.113/25)

Regional plans of action on aging

(A/CONF.113/26)

149. The Committee met from 27 July to 5 August, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. H. B. de Bono (Malta), who was elected by acclamation at the World Assembly's 1st meeting on 26 July 1982.

150. The Committee elected the following other officers by acclamation:

Vice Chairmen: Mrs. M. Perez Palacio (Peru)

Dr. D. F. Chebotarev (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

Mr. Mutombo Tsitaimbwe (Zaire)

Rapporteur: Mr. Abdullah Malim Baginda (Malaysia)

151. The Committee decided to concentrate its work on the preparation of an international plan of action on aging, taking as the basis of its work the draft International Plan of Action on Aging contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/22).

152. After having considered the draft plan and amendments thereto proposed by a large number of delegations (A/CONF.113/MC/L.1, 2, 3/Rev.1, L.4-19, L.20 and Add.1

and Add.2/Corr.1 (English only), L.21-26), in the course of both formal and informal meetings, the Main Committee decided at its 17th meeting on 5 August to recommend to the Assembly for adoption the text of the International Plan of Action on Aging reproduced in the annex to its report (A/CONF.113/MC/L.27* together with A/CONF/113/30).

Action by the World Assembly

153. At the 17th plenary meeting on 6 August 1982 the World Assembly considered the report of the Main Committee (A/CONF.113/MC/L.27* in conjunction with A/CONF.113/30) which was introduced by Mr. A. H. B. de Bono (Malta), Chairman of the Committee.

154. At the same meeting the World Assembly adopted by consensus the text of the International Plan of Action recommended by the Main Committee. For the text of the Plan of Action as adopted see chapter VI, below.

155. After the adoption of the Plan of Action, statements were made by the representatives of Peru, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (on behalf of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe), Malaysia (on behalf of the Asian group of countries), Israel, Spain and Brazil.

156. The representative of Brazil stated that the Brazilian delegation wished to place on record that it considered paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Plan of Action as among the most important provisions of the Plan of Action since they recognized the urgent need for the establishment of a new international economic order. Nevertheless, the Brazilian delegation reserved its position with respect to the limitative expression "most of the developing countries" contained in the second sentence of paragraph 14, which was not in conformity with the objectives of the Plan of Action as a whole and which, above all, was inconsistent with the resolutions, plans, programmes, strategies, etc. adopted by the General Assembly.

B. Report of the Credentials Committee

157. At its 6th plenary meeting, on 28 July 1982, the World Assembly, in accordance with rule 4 of its rules of procedure, appointed a Credentials Committee consisting of the following States: Argentina, China, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Thailand, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and United States of America.

158. The Credentials Committee convened on 29 July 1982.

159. Mr. Djibo Doufray (Niger) was unanimously elected Chairman.

160. The Committee had before it a memorandum dated 29 July 1982 from the Secretary-General of the World Assembly on the status, as at 29 July 1982, of credentials of the representatives to the Assembly. The memorandum as orally amended by the Legal Adviser during the meeting (see next paragraph) indicated that:

(a) Credentials issued by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, as provided for in rule 3 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, had been received in respect of representatives of 67 States, namely: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Benin, Botswana, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic

Kampuchea, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Guatemala, Haiti, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Seychelles, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Yugoslavia;

(b) Credentials in the form of a telegram from the Head of State or Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs had been received in respect of representatives of 12 States, namely: Brazil, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay;

(c) Credentials in the form of a letter, note verbale or telegram emanating from a Permanent Representative, an Ambassador, a Minister other than the Foreign Minister, or from a Permanent Mission, Embassy or Ministry of the State concerned had been received in respect of representatives of 25 States, namely: Argentina, Belgium, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Greece, India, Israel, Ivory Coast, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zaire;

(d) As at 29 July 1982, representatives of 118 States had registered as participants in the Assembly. Accordingly, no credentials had yet been received from the representatives of 14 States, namely: Bangladesh, Democratic Yemen, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, United Republic of Cameroon, Yemen, Zambia.

161. The Legal Adviser stated that since the preparation of the memorandum by the Secretary-General of the Assembly, representatives of additional States had registered and some had submitted credentials. Accordingly, the Legal Adviser orally amended the memorandum to reflect the status at the time of the meeting. The contents of the memorandum, as orally amended, are set out in the foregoing paragraph. The Legal Adviser further explained that the States listed in subparagraph (a) above had submitted credentials in the form required by rule 3 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly; the States mentioned in subparagraph (b) had submitted credentials in the form of telegrams emanating from the authorities referred to in rule 3, while the States mentioned in subparagraph (c) had issued credentials signed by authorities other than those referred to in rule 3; the States referred to in subparagraph (d) had registered delegates as participants in the Assembly, but had not yet submitted any credentials. The Legal Adviser stated that the practice was to approve the credentials issued in the form required by rule 3, to approve provisionally those credentials which were not in proper form and to recommend to the Assembly that the delegations that had not yet submitted credentials should be permitted to continue to participate in the Assembly on the understanding that proper credentials would be submitted as soon as possible.

162. In response to a question from the representative of the United States, the Legal Adviser stated that under rule 5 of the rules of procedure, representatives were entitled to participate provisionally in the Assembly, pending a decision of the Assembly on their credentials. It was not, therefore, in contravention of the rules of procedure that delegations had participated in voting before the Assembly

had acted on their credentials. In reply to a question by the representative of Nigeria, the Legal Adviser stated that if no credentials were received from a State participating in the Assembly, its right to participate in the work of the Assembly or the regularity of the proceedings of the Assembly would not be affected. In response to the representative of Thailand the Secretary said that certain of the delegations listed in paragraph 160, subparagraphs (b), (c) and (d), had already indicated their intention to submit credentials conforming to the requirements of rule 3 of the rules of procedure.

163. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that "The delegations of Afghanistan, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Democratic Yemen, Ethiopia, German Democratic Republic, Hungarian People's Republic, Polish People's Republic, Republic of Angola, Republic of Cuba, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at the United Nations World Assembly on Aging adamantly protest against the presence at the Assembly of the persons, calling themselves 'the representatives' of the so-called 'Democratic Kampuchea', who represent nobody but the remnants of the criminal régime put down by the Kampuchean people. The only legitimate representative of the Kampuchean people is the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, which has the mandate of the People's Assembly, elected in May 1981 in the course of free general elections, with the participation of 97 per cent of the Kampuchean population. Only the representatives, appointed by it, can represent this country at the United Nations and its international fora. The delegations referred to above request that the statement be considered an official protest." At the request of the representative this statement was, with the consent of the Committee, included verbatim in its report.

164. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics also reaffirmed the non-acceptance by his delegation of the credentials submitted by the fascist junta in Chile, which had been stated repeatedly in the General Assembly of the United Nations and in other international bodies.

165. The representative of the Netherlands recalled that rule 3 of the rules of procedure provided that the credentials of delegations should be issued either by the Head of the State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Pursuant to rule 4 the task of the Credentials Committee was to examine the credentials of the representatives. His delegation interpreted this rule to mean that the Committee's task was limited to verifying whether the credentials had been issued by the Head of the State or Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs in office of the country concerned. With regard to Kampuchea, it was a fact that at present no authority could claim to represent Kampuchea. Therefore the Government of the Netherlands could not support the acceptance of the credentials presented by the Government of Democratic Kampuchea and his delegation wished to abstain on this question.

166. The representative of Panama expressed the view that the task of the World Assembly was to consider the question of aging and that it would be desirable to avoid spending time debating purely political questions.

167. The representative of China stated that "It is well known that Democratic Kampuchea is a Member State of the United Nations. Since the World Assembly on Aging has been convened by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly the question of the representative of Democratic Kampuchea does not exist at all. The

question raised by the Soviet representative is beyond the framework of the terms of reference of the Assembly. It is a vain attempt to prevent the legal representative of the Kampuchean people from participating in the Assembly and it is a deliberate move to interrupt the orderly progress of the Assembly. The Chinese delegation resolutely opposes this kind of manoeuvre by the Soviet representative." At the request of the representative this statement was, with the consent of the Committee, included verbatim in its report.

168. The representative of Thailand stated that the credentials of Democratic Kampuchea were fully valid. He concurred with the remarks by the representative of Panama.

169. On the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"The Credentials Committee,

"Having examined the credentials of the representatives to the World Assembly of Aging, referred to in paragraph 160 above,

"Taking into account the different reservations expressed by delegations during the debate,

"1. Accepts the credentials of the 67 States referred to in paragraph 160(a) above;

"2. Accepts provisionally the communications relating to the representatives of the 37 States referred to in paragraph 160(b) and (c) above, pending the receipt of credentials complying with rule 3 of the rules of procedure;

"3. Recommends that the representatives of the 14 States referred to in paragraph 160(d) above should continue to participate provisionally in accordance with rule 5 of the rules of procedure, pending the receipt of credentials complying with rule 3."

170. The Committee also decided to authorize its Chairman to formulate the report of the Committee with the assistance of the Secretary, and to submit the report to the World Assembly after having shown a draft thereof to the members of the Committee. The Chairman was further authorized to supplement, when introducing the report in the Assembly, the information set out in paragraph 160 above so as to reflect any further registrations, credentials and communications received by the Secretary-General after the meeting of the Committee.

171. On the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee decided to submit its report to the World Assembly for approval.

Action by the World Assembly

172. At the 15th plenary meeting on 5 August 1982 the World Assembly considered the report of the Credentials Committee (A/CONF.113/29), which was introduced by Mr. Djibo Doufray (Niger), Chairman of the Committee.

173. When introducing the Committee's report he provided some supplementary information that had been communicated since the report had been prepared. In particular, he announced that credentials issued by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs had been received in respect of the representatives of Belgium, Costa Rica, Finland, Greece, Japan, Nicaragua, San Marino, Sri Lanka, and Tunisia; and that credentials in the form of a letter, note verbale or telegram from a Permanent Representative, an Ambassador, a Minister other than the Foreign Minister or from a Permanent Mission, Embassy or Ministry of the State concerned had been received in respect of the representatives of Burundi, Guinea, Togo, United Republic of Cameroon and Zambia. He added that the relevant subparagraphs of the Credentials Committee's report should be considered in the light of this supplementary information and rectified accordingly.

174. At the same meeting, the World Assembly, after taking note of the supplementary information, approved the report of the Credentials Committee (for the decision see chapter VI below).

Chapter V

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE WORLD ASSEMBLY

175. The Rapporteur-General introduced the draft report of the World Assembly (A/CONF.113/L.2 and Add.1-3) at the 15th plenary meeting on 5 August 1982. At that meeting and at the 16th plenary meeting on the same date the Assembly considered chapters I, II and III of the draft report and adopted them with certain amendments.

176. At the 17th plenary meeting on 6 August 1982, the President announced that, after consultations in the General Committee, certain draft resolutions which had been circulated had been withdrawn by their respective sponsors. The draft resolutions in question were:

- A/CONF.113/L.5 entitled "Practical training centres", sponsored by Jamaica and Malta
- A/CONF.113/L.6 entitled "Establishment of an international clearing house on aging policies", sponsored by the Dominican Republic, France and Poland
- A/CONF.113/L.7 entitled "Support from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) for matters in the field of aging", sponsored by Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama and Peru
- A/CONF.113/L.8 entitled "Protection of elderly consumers", sponsored by Angola, Austria, France, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines and Senegal*
- A/CONF.113/L.9 entitled "International co-operation", sponsored by Chile and Tunisia
- A/CONF.113/L.10 entitled "United Nations Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging", sponsored by Chile, Guatemala, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Philippines, Tunisia, United States of America and Zaire
- A/CONF.113/L.11 entitled "Strengthening of the capacity of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs", sponsored by Chile, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malta, Philippines and Tunisia.

177. The representative of Japan drew attention to the draft resolution entitled "A Day for the Aging" (A/CONF.113/L.4) sponsored by her delegation jointly with the delegations of Indonesia, Malaysia, Malta, Pakistan, Peru and Senegal. After explaining the purpose of the draft resolution she stated that, after consultations, the sponsors had agreed not to press this draft resolution and, in a spirit of co-operation, withdrew it.

* As a consequence, the Netherlands amendments (A/CONF.113/L.12) to this draft resolution were likewise withdrawn.

178. At the 17th (closing) plenary meeting on 6 August 1982, the representative of Mexico introduced a draft resolution expressing the World Assembly's gratitude to the host country. The draft resolution was adopted by acclamation. For the text as adopted see chapter VI below, resolution 2.

179. At the same meeting, the World Assembly adopted the draft report as a whole and authorized the Rapporteur-General to complete the report, in conformity with the practice of the United Nations, with a view to its submission to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

180. Also at the same meeting the World Assembly heard an address by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He stated that of all the major United Nations conferences held in recent years, the World Assembly on Aging was the one whose subject matter intimately touched upon the present or future of every man, woman and child who lived a normal span of life. Longevity, in the past, had been for the few: in the twentieth century it had become the destiny of the majority. Thus, for the first time in history, the entire world was confronted by a phenomenon of diverse implications: social, cultural, economic, political and even emotional. To those for whom the world of the aging represented a world of shadows, the work of the World Assembly should prove a beacon of light. Its positive approach could lift up the hearts of many who must confront the challenge in the years to come. It was, therefore, a World Assembly for the young as well as for the old.

181. This applied to the collective attitudes and actions of societies, of nations, as well as to those of the individual. The young countries of the world, those faced with the problem of providing for vast masses of children and young people, would soon have to meet the further challenge of ensuring a safe and happy existence for exactly the same people when, in only a few decades, they reached old age. To instil into the minds of individuals and societies, young, middle-aged and old, the idea that aging was an achievement, an opportunity to fulfil our hopes and aspirations as human beings and human societies, had been the main purpose of the World Assembly.

182. He had been particularly impressed by the broad participation of governments in the Assembly, with a large number of delegations from the developing countries. There could be no better sign of the world-wide recognition that the subject of the Assembly concerned everyone, every country, either at present or in the future. Indeed, by the year 2025, the developing countries would reach levels of aging similar to those reached in other regions in the 1950s, when the special problems of the aging had begun to impinge forcefully upon public consciousness in industrialized societies. These demographic trends were bound to have an impact on social life and progress. At certain stages of development, trends of population growth, age distribution and demographic structure could create additional difficulties for sustained development, if they were out of balance with social, economic and environmental factors. On the other hand, if taken into account and properly planned for, these trends could enhance development.

183. When the United Nations had been established, it had not been apparent that the world's population structure would change so dramatically and that the aging in both the developed and developing countries would come to constitute such a substantial proportion of human society. The World Assembly, therefore, was yet another example of how the United Nations had tried to respond effectively to large-scale economic, social and other shifts.

184. Another aspect of the World Assembly merited attention. It was one of the few occasions on which an issue of global impact and importance had been considered by the international community at a relatively early stage, before it was too late. The whole purpose and thrust of this forward-looking Assembly were most encouraging to the international community.

185. He referred to the basic principles of the International Plan of Action on Aging, namely that the ultimate aim of economic growth or development was the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population; that the process of economic growth or development must always promote human dignity; that the change in population structures could have a significant effect on economic growth, the composition of the labour force, patterns of consumption and needs for goods and services; that the aging were a valuable national resource; and that essential and proper medical care should be the key to the attainment and preservation by all peoples of a level of health permitting them to lead a socially and economically productive life.

186. He added that he would direct the various departments and offices of the United Nations to be responsive to the recommendations and resolutions of the World Assembly, as well as to the Plan of Action, and to co-operate fully in their fulfilment. In particular, the Offices of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and of the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs would ensure the implementation of the Plan of Action through the appropriate offices of the Organization. In this endeavour, the co-operation of the specialized agencies would also be called for, in accordance with their specific interests and competences.

187. In conclusion, he said that efforts towards international co-operation and exchange of views in this field should be undertaken with the greatest respect for the particular traditions and cultural values of every nation or ethnic community. However, a basic unity of human values characterized the concern with the aging and the elderly in any culture and society. Aging was an inevitable process and every human person must consider in advance the possible difficulties of marginalization, passivity, loneliness or despair, together with questions concerning health care, housing and some form of income security. The International Plan of Action on Aging would, he hoped, prove a most useful instrument for ensuring that a generally extending life span all over the world would be accompanied by determined efforts to fill this extension of time with a new meaning. Every man and woman who had reached or expected to reach the age of wisdom would support endeavours in all societies towards this end.

188. After statements by the representatives of Senegal (on behalf of the group of African States), Uruguay (on behalf of the Latin American countries), Canada (on behalf of the Western European and other States), the United Arab Emirates and Jordan (on behalf of the Arab countries), the Secretary-General of the World Assembly on Aging made a statement summing up the principal results of the Assembly.

189. The President of the World Assembly on Aging made a closing statement and declared the Assembly closed.

Chapter VI

INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGING AND OTHER RESOLUTIONS AND DECISION OF THE WORLD ASSEMBLY

190. At its 15th and 17th plenary meetings on 5 and 6 August 1982 the World Assembly adopted the Plan of Action (sect. A below) and the resolutions and decision (sect. B below) the text of which is set out in this chapter.

A. VIENNA INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGING

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PREAMBLE

The countries gathered in the World Assembly on aging,

Aware that an increasing number of their populations is aging,

Having discussed together their concern for the aging, and in the light of this the achievement of longevity and the challenge and potential it entails,

Having determined that individually and collectively they will (i) develop and apply at the international, regional and national levels policies designed to enhance the lives of the aging as individuals and to allow them to enjoy in mind and in body, fully and freely, their advancing years in peace, health and security; and (ii) study the impact of aging populations on development and that of development on the aging, with a view to enabling the potential of the aging to be fully realized and to mitigating, by appropriate measures, any negative effects resulting from this impact,

1. Do solemnly reaffirm their belief that the fundamental and inalienable rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights apply fully and undiminishedly to the aging; and

2. Do solemnly recognize that 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.

FOREWORD

1. Recognizing the need to call world-wide attention to the serious problems besetting a growing portion of the populations of the world, the General Assembly of the United Nations decided, in resolution 33/52 of 14 December 1978, to convene a World Assembly on Aging in 1982. The purpose of the World Assembly would be to provide a forum "to launch an international action programme aimed at guaranteeing economic and social security to older persons, as well as opportunities to contribute to national development". In its resolution 35/129 of 11 December 1980, the General Assembly further indicated its desire that the World Assembly "should result in societies responding more fully to the socio-economic implications of the aging of populations and to the specific needs of older persons". It was with these mandates in view that the present International Plan of Action on Aging was conceived.

2. The Plan of Action should therefore be considered an integral component of the major international, regional and national strategies and programmes formulated in response to important world problems and needs. Its primary aims are to strengthen the capacities of countries to deal effectively with the aging of their populations and with the special concerns and needs of their elderly, and to promote an appropriate international response to the issues of aging through action for the establishment of the new international economic order and increased international technical co-operation, particularly among the developing countries themselves.

3. In pursuance of these aims, specific objectives are set:

(a) To further national and international understanding of the economic, social and cultural implications for the processes of development of the aging of the population;

(b) To promote national and international understanding of the humanitarian and developmental issues related to aging;

(c) To propose and stimulate action-oriented policies and programmes aimed at guaranteeing social and economic security for the elderly, as well as providing opportunities for them to contribute to, and share in the benefits of, development;

(d) To present policy alternatives and options consistent with national values and goals and with internationally recognized principles with regard to the aging of the population and the needs of the elderly; and

(e) To encourage the development of appropriate education, training and research to respond to the aging of the world's population and to foster an international exchange of skills and knowledge in this area.

4. The Plan of Action should be considered within the framework of other international strategies and plans. In particular, it reaffirms the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217 A (III)), the International Covenants on Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI)) and the Declaration on Social Progress and Development (General Assembly resolution 2542 (XXIV)), the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International

Economic Order (General Assembly resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI)) and the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 35/56) and also General Assembly resolutions 34/75 and 35/46, declaring the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade.

5. In addition, the importance of the following, adopted by the international community, must be stressed, for the question of aging and the aging of populations is directly related to the attainment of their objectives:

- (a) The World Population Plan of Action; 1/
- (b) The World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year; 2/
- (c) The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women; 3/
- (d) The Declaration of Alma Ata (on primary health care); 4/
- (e) Declaration of Principles of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT); 5/
- (f) The Action Plan for the Human Environment; 6/
- (g) The Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development; 7/
- (h) The Programme of Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination 8/ and the Programme of Action for the second half of the same Decade; 9/
- (i) The Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries; 10/
- (j) The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 102 concerning minimum standards of social security;
- (k) ILO convention No. 128 and Recommendation 131 on invalidity, old-age and survivors' benefits;
- (l) ILO Recommendation No. 162 concerning older workers;
- (m) The Programme of Action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development; 11/.
- (n) The World Programme resulting from International Year of Disabled Persons; 12/
- (o) The Caracas Declaration adopted by the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; 13/
- (p) The Recommendation on the development of adult education, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its nineteenth session (Nairobi, 1976);
- (q) ILO Convention No. 157 concerning maintenance of social security rights, 1982.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Demographic background

6. Only in the past few decades has the attention of national societies and the world community been drawn to the social, economic, political and scientific questions raised by the phenomenon of aging on a massive scale. Previously, while individuals may have lived into advanced stages of life, their numbers and proportion in the total population were not high. The twentieth century, however, has witnessed in many regions of the world the control of perinatal and infant mortality, a decline in birth rates, improvements in nutrition, basic health care and the control of many infectious diseases. This combination of factors has resulted in an increasing number and proportion of persons surviving into the advanced stages of life.

7. In 1950, according to United Nations estimates, there were approximately 200 million persons 60 years of age and over throughout the world. By 1975, their number had increased to 350 million. United Nations projections to the year 2000 indicate that the number will increase to 590 million, and by the year 2025 to over 1,100 million; that is, an increase of 224 per cent since 1975. During this same period, the world's population as a whole is expected to increase from 4.1 billion to 8.2 billion, an increase of 102 per cent. Thus, 45 years from now the aging will constitute 13.7 per cent of the world's population.

8. It should be noted, furthermore, that in 1975 slightly over half (52 per cent) of all persons aged 60 and over lived in the developing countries. By the year 2000 - owing to the differential rates of increase - over 60 per cent of all older persons are expected to live in those countries, and it is anticipated that the proportion will reach nearly three quarters (72 per cent) by 2025.

9. The increase in the numbers and proportions of the aging is accompanied by a change in the population's age structure. A declining proportion of children in a population increases the proportion of older persons. Thus, according to the United Nations projections, the population aged less than 15 years in the developing regions is expected to decline from an average of about 41 per cent of the total population in 1975 to 33 per cent in 2000 and 26 per cent in 2025. In the same regions, the population of 60 years and over is expected to increase from 6 per cent in 1975 to 7 per cent in 2000 and to 12 per cent in 2025, thus reaching the level observed in the developed regions in the 1950s. In those latter regions, the population below the age of 15 is expected to decline from 25 per cent in 1975 to 21 per cent in 2000 and to 20 per cent in 2025; however, the group aged 60 and over is expected to increase as a proportion of the total population, from 15 per cent in 1975 to 18 per cent in 2000 and 23 per cent in 2025. It should be noted that these are averages for vast regions and that considerable variations exist between countries and at the subnational level.

10. According to model life tables, increasing life expectancy at birth could imply an increase in life expectancies at age 60 in the developed regions of approximately one year between 1975 and 2025. In the developing regions, the projected increase would be roughly 2.5 years. Men of the age of 60 could thus expect an average of over 17 years of further life in the developed regions by 2025

and of over 16 years in the developing regions. Women could expect about an additional 21 and 18 years, respectively.

11. It should be noted that, if present trends prevail, the sex ratio (that is, the number of men per 100 women) will continue to be unbalanced in the developed regions with, however, a slight improvement. For instance, this rate, which in 1975 was 74 for the 60-69 age group will be 78 in 2025, with a rise from 48 to 53 for the over-80 age group. In the developing regions, this rate will be 94 in 2025 against 96 for the 60-69 age group, and 73 against 78 for the over-80 age group, signifying a slight decline. Thus, women, in most cases, will increasingly constitute a majority of the older population. Gender-based differences in longevity may have some impact of living arrangements, income, health care and other support systems.

12. Another important consideration is the trend in urban-rural distribution. In the developed regions, two thirds of the aged were in urban areas in 1975, and this proportion is expected to reach three quarters by the year 2000. In the developing regions, three quarters of the aged were to be found in rural areas. Nevertheless, the increase in the proportion of the aging in urban areas in these countries could be considerable and exceed 40 per cent by the year 2000. These changes can be influenced by migration.

B. Humanitarian and developmental aspects of aging

13. The demographic trends outlined above will have significant effects on society. The achievement of sustained development requires that a proper balance be preserved between social, economic and environmental factors and changes in population growth distribution and structure. Countries should recognize and take into account their demographic trends and changes in the structure of their populations in order to optimize their development.

14. For this purpose a substantial financial effort will be needed on the part of Governments and the international institutions concerned. Actually however, the economic situation of most of the developing countries is such that they are unable to release the means and resources needed for carrying out their development policy successfully.

15. In order to enable these countries to deal with the basic needs of their population, including the elderly, it is necessary to establish a new economic order based on new international economic relations that are mutually beneficial and that will make possible a just and equitable utilization of the available wealth, resources and technology.

16. The present International Plan of Action on Aging deals both with issues affecting the aging as individuals and those relating to the aging of the population.

17. The humanitarian issues relate to the specific needs of the elderly. Although the elderly share many problems and needs with the rest of the population, certain issues reflect the specific characteristics and requirements of this group. The sub-topics examined are health and nutrition, housing and environment, the family, social welfare, income security and employment, and education.

18. The developmental issues relate to the socio-economic implications of the

aging of the population, defined as an increase in the proportion of the aging in the total population. Under this heading are considered, inter alia, the effects of the aging of the population on production, consumption, savings, investment and - in turn - general social and economic conditions and policies, especially at times when the dependency rate of the aging is on the increase.

19. These humanitarian and developmental issues are examined with a view to the formulation of action programmes at the national, regional and international levels.

20. In some developing countries, the trend towards a gradual aging of the society has not yet become prominent and may not, therefore, attract the full attention of planners and policy makers who take account of the problems of the aged in their over-all economic and social development planning and action to satisfy the basic needs of the population as a whole. As outlined in the preceding section, however, United Nations projections show that:

(a) A marked increase in the population over the age of 60 years is expected in the future, particularly in the segment of those aged 80 years and over;

(b) In many countries, the increase in the proportion of the over-60 population is expected to become apparent over the next few decades, and especially during the first quarter of the twenty-first century; and

(c) Increasingly women will constitute the majority of these elderly populations.

21. The issue of the aging of populations, with its vast implications both for over-all development at the national level and for the welfare and safety of older individuals, is therefore one which will concern all countries in the relatively near future; it already affects some of the more developed regions of the world.

22. The measures for the optimum utilization of the wisdom and expertise of elderly individuals will be considered.

23. The human race is characterized by a long childhood and by a long old age. Throughout history this has enabled older persons to educate the younger and pass on values to them; this role has ensured man's survival and progress. The presence of the elderly in the family home, the neighbourhood and in all forms of social life still teaches an irreplaceable lesson of humanity. Not only by his life, but indeed by his death, the older person teaches us all a lesson. Through grief the survivors come to understand that the dead do continue to participate in the human community, by the results of their labour, the works and institutions they leave behind them, and the memory of their words and deeds. This may encourage us to regard our own death with greater serenity and to grow more fully aware of the responsibilities toward future generations.

24. A longer life provides humans with an opportunity to examine their lives in retrospect, to correct some of their mistakes, to get closer to the truth and to achieve a different understanding of the sense and value of their actions. This may well be the more important contribution of older people to the human community. Especially at this time, after the unprecedented changes that have affected human kind in their life-time, the reinterpretation of life-stories by the aged should help us all to achieve the urgently needed reorientation of history.

II. PRINCIPLES

25. The formulation and implementation of policies on aging are the sovereign right and responsibility of each State, to be carried out on the basis of its specific national needs and objectives. However, the promotion of the activities, safety and well-being of the elderly should be an essential part of an integrated and concerted development effort within the framework of the new international economic order in both the developed and the developing parts of the world. International and regional co-operation should, however, play an important role. The International Plan of Action on Aging is based on the principles set out below:

(a) The aim of development is to improve the well-being of the entire population on the basis of its full participation in the process of development and an equitable distribution of the benefits therefrom. The development process must enhance human dignity and ensure equity among age groups in the sharing of society's resources, rights and responsibilities. Individuals, regardless of age, sex or creed, should contribute according to their abilities and be served according to their needs. In this context, economic growth, productive employment, social justice and human solidarity are fundamental and indivisible elements of development, and so are the preservation and recognition of cultural identity;

(b) Various problems of older people can find their real solution under conditions of peace, security, a halt to the arms race and a rechanneling of resources spent for military purposes to the needs of economic and social development;

(c) The developmental and humanitarian problems of the aging can best find their solution under conditions where tyranny and oppression, colonialism, racism, discrimination based on race, sex or religion, apartheid, genocide, foreign aggression and occupation and other forms of foreign domination do not prevail, and where there is respect for human rights;

(d) In the context of its own traditions, structures and cultural values, each country should respond to demographic trends and the resulting changes. People of all ages should engage in creating a balance between traditional and innovative elements in the pursuit of harmonious development;

(e) The spiritual, cultural and socio-economic contributions of the aging are valuable to society and should be so recognized and promoted further. Expenditure on the aging should be considered as a lasting investment;

(f) The family, in its diverse forms and structures, is a fundamental unit of society linking the generations and should be maintained, strengthened and protected, in accordance with the traditions and customs of each country;

(g) Governments and, in particular, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, individual volunteers and voluntary organizations, including associations of the elderly, can make a particularly significant contribution to the provision of support and care for elderly people in the family and community. Governments should sustain and encourage voluntary activity of this kind;

(h) An important objective of socio-economic development is an age-integrated

society, in which age discrimination and involuntary segregation are eliminated and in which solidarity and mutual support among generations are encouraged;

(i) Aging is a life-long process and should be recognized as such. Preparation of the entire population for the later stages of life should be an integral part of social policies and encompass physical, psychological, cultural, religious, spiritual, economic, health and other factors;

(j) The Plan of Action should be considered within the broader context of the world's social, economic, cultural and spiritual trends, in order to achieve a just and prosperous life for the aging, materially as well as spiritually;

(k) Aging, in addition to being a symbol of experience and wisdom, can also bring human beings closer to personal fulfilment, according to their beliefs and aspirations;

(l) The aging should be active participants in the formulation and implementation of policies, including those especially affecting them;

(m) Governments, non-governmental organizations and all concerned have a special responsibility to the most vulnerable among the elderly, particularly the poor, of whom many are women and from rural areas;

(n) Further study on all aspects of aging is necessary.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

A. Goals and policy recommendations

26. The Plan of Action can only include proposals for broad guidelines and general principles as to the ways in which the international community, Governments, other institutions and society at large can meet the challenge of the progressive aging of societies and the needs of the elderly all over the world. More specific approaches and policies must, by their nature, be conceived of and phrased in terms of the traditions, cultural values and practices of each country or ethnic community, and programmes of action must be adapted to the priorities and material capacities of each country or community.

27. There are, nevertheless, a number of basic considerations which reflect general and fundamental human values, independent of culture, religion, race or social status: values induced by the biological fact that aging is a common and ineluctable process. The respect and care for the elderly, which has been one of the few constants in human culture everywhere, reflects a basic interplay between self-preserving and society-preserving impulses which has conditioned the survival and progress of the human race.

28. The pattern by which people are judged to have reached old age at a point set only in terms of the number of years they have completed, and where the loss of employment status may entail their being placed on the sidelines of their own society, is one of the sad paradoxes of the process of socio-economic development in some countries. The aim of that development was originally to improve the general living standards, health and well-being of the population at large, including the elderly.

29. The close historical interaction between the socio-economic and technological development of the industrialized countries from the last century onwards, and the old-age security systems they adopted as a part of the same process, should be analysed and kept in mind; however, other options corresponding more closely to the circumstances and needs of the developing countries ought also to be considered.

30. Aging is simultaneously a sign of and a result of socio-economic development, in the quantitative as well as the qualitative sense. One major example of the effects of the imbalance between the sectoral approaches taken to national and international development during the past decades is the fact that advances in medicine and public health have by far out-paced progress over the same period in production, income distribution, training, education, housing, institutional modernization and social development in general terms. The developing countries are in this sense about to "age" without all the sectors necessary to ensure balanced and integrated development being able to follow at the same pace and guarantee a decent living standard for the dramatically increasing numbers of elderly people foreseen for the next few generations.

1. General policy recommendations

31. The following summarized considerations, based on the above remarks, may provide guidelines for the consideration of policies and specific actions:

(a) The progressive aging of societies, the continuing increase of the elderly population both in absolute and in proportional terms, is neither an unexpected, unforeseeable event nor a random result of national and international development efforts. It is the first and most visible outcome of a sectorally based approach to socio-economic development all over the world and should be accompanied by equally efficient interventions in other areas in order to ensure balanced growth and integrated development;

(b) With a long-term view to slowing down the over-all aging of the community, Governments may be able to take the measures necessary to adjust or avoid imbalances between age groups, while preserving the right to life of the elderly;

(c) To this end, policies and actions should be inspired by the determination to give further qualitative content and meaning to a quantitative process in order to make sure that the generally expanding life-span of individuals the world over will be accompanied by efforts to fill these extra years with a sense of purpose and accomplishment, and that people will not be relegated to a marginal and passive role after a certain age level;

(d) As the transition into old age is a gradual and individual process, notwithstanding the statutory retirement age limits adopted in some countries and cultures, all policies and programmes should be based on the fact that aging is a natural phase of an individual's life cycle, career and experience, and that the same needs, capacities and potentialities usually prevail over the entire life-span;

(e) As most people can expect to survive their own retirement age by a substantial number of years, the concept of "preparation for retirement" should not continue to be conceived as a last-minute adaptation, but be proposed as a life-long consideration from adulthood onwards - as much to the individual for his or her future benefit, as to policy-makers, universities, schools, industrial work centres, the media and society at large. It should serve as a reminder that

policies on aging and for the elderly are an important society-wide concern, and not solely a question of caring for a vulnerable minority. For this reason, this calls for a general policy of prevention;

(f) Policies to meet the challenge of a growing, healthier and more active elderly population - based on the view of the aging of society as an opportunity to be utilized - automatically benefit the individual aging person, materially and otherwise. Similarly, any effort to ameliorate the quality of life for the elderly, and to meet their diverse social and cultural needs, enhances their capacity to continue interacting with society. In this sense, the developmental and the humanitarian aspects of the question of aging are closely intertwined;

(g) It is imperative that, when considering the question of aging, the situation of the elderly should not be considered separate from the over-all socio-economic conditions prevailing in society. The elderly should be viewed as an integral part of the population. They should also be considered within the framework of population groups such as women, youth, the disabled, and migrant workers. The elderly must be considered an important and necessary element in the development process at all levels within a given society;

(h) Aging is apparent in the working-age population long before the number of persons over 60 increases. It is essential to adapt the labour policy as a whole and technology and economic organizations to this situation;

(i) This consideration should be accompanied by recognition of the fact that for the elderly in general - and particularly for those beyond a certain higher age (the "old old") - policies have to be considered and programmes implemented in response to their specific needs and constraints. Sectoral interventions in such fields as health and nutrition, housing, income security, and social, cultural and leisure activities are as necessary for the elderly as for other population groups, and should be provided for by each country or community according to the means available to it. It is recognized that the extent of the provision that can be made, and its timing, will be affected by prevailing economic circumstances;

(j) Policies and action aimed at benefiting the aging must afford opportunities for older persons to satisfy the need for personal fulfilment, which can be defined in its broader sense as satisfaction realized through the achievement of personal goals and aspirations, and the realization of potentialities. It is important that policies and programmes directed at the aging promote opportunities for self-expression in a variety of roles challenging to themselves and contributory to family and community. The principal ways in which older people find personal satisfaction are through: continued participation in the family and kinship system, voluntary services to the community, continuing growth through formal and informal learning, self-expression in arts and crafts, participation in community organizations and organizations of older people, religious activities, recreation and travel, part-time work, and participation in the political process as informed citizens.

32. A priority consideration for all countries is how to ensure that their vast humanitarian efforts in favour of the elderly do not result in the maintenance of a growing, relatively passive and disenchanting sector of the population. Policy makers and researchers, as well as the mass media and the general public, may need a radical change of perspective in order to appreciate that the problem of aging today is not just one of providing protection and care, but of the involvement and

participation of the elderly and the aging. Eventually, the transition to a positive, active and developmentally oriented view of aging may well result from action by elderly people themselves, through the sheer force of their growing numbers and influence. The collective consciousness of being elderly, as a socially unifying concept, can in that way become a positive factor. Since spiritual well-being is as important as material well-being, all policies, programmes and activities should be developed to support and strengthen the spiritual well-being of the aging. Governments should guarantee the freedom of religious practices and expression.

2. The impact of aging on development

33. The trend towards the successive aging of population structures is bound to be one of the main challenges to international and national planning efforts during the last decades of this century and well into the twenty-first. In addition to the general considerations outlined above on the status and predicaments of the elderly sections of societies, and the review of the needs and potentialities of the elderly, attention should be given to the vast and multifaceted impact which the aging of populations will have on the structure, functioning and further development of all societies of the world. The role of the public and private sectors in assuming responsibility for some of the functions now provided by the family in developing countries will probably have to increase under such circumstances.

34. In the first instance, it is evident that aging, both in terms of absolute numbers and in terms of the relative proportion of the elderly in any society, will necessarily change the structure and composition of the economically active population. The most basic manifestation of this phenomenon will be the gradually deteriorating ratios between the economically active and employed sectors of society and those dependent for their sustenance on the material resources provided by these sectors. Countries with established social security systems will depend on the strength of the economy to sustain the accumulated charges of income-basis and deferred retirement benefits for a growing elderly population and the costs of maintaining dependent children and of ensuring training and education for young people.

35. Changing dependency ratios - in terms of the number of old people depending for their material safety on younger, economically active and wage-earning people - are bound to influence the development of any country in the world, irrespective of its social structure, traditions or formal social security arrangements. Problems of a social nature are likely to emerge in countries and regions where the aging have traditionally benefited from the care and protection of their next of kin or the local community. Those relationships may become increasingly difficult to maintain when the number of dependent elderly increases while at the same time traditional care-providing structures, such as the extended family, are undergoing radical change in many regions of the world.

36. As mentioned above, the total dependency ratio in many countries may eventually be maintained at close to present levels, owing to the progressively decreasing number of non-employed and dependent children and youths resulting from shrinking birth rates. There remains, however, a political and psychological problem related to the perceptions of the relative urgency of covering the material and other needs of population groups not directly participating in production and public life. The costs of programmes in favour of the younger generations may be

more easily acceptable in view of their value as a form of investment in the future; conversely, such costs in favour of the elderly - especially when not directly related to individual savings or wage-related benefits - are less easily accepted, particularly when they weigh heavily on already overstrained national budgets.

37. The problem of deteriorating dependency ratios, and hence of guaranteeing even minimal material security for older people with reduced capacities for earning, will be most acute in the rural areas, particularly in the less productive, subsistence farming areas of the developing countries, which already suffer from an escalating flight of the younger and more active sectors of the population towards the urban areas in search of wage-earning employment. This trend naturally leads to an even more insecure future for the older persons left behind and - in a vicious circle of further deprivation - reduces the chances of further stimulating public investment in agriculture and services which would benefit the remaining farmers.

38. To some extent this phenomenon could be considered as partially offset or at least mitigated by the transfer of sustenance funds back from the younger people who have found salaried employment in the urban and industrialized areas. In many cases, the size of the remittances indicates an effort not only to help sustain the family, but to save for future investments, productive or not. For the immediate future, this phenomenon may help to soften the effects of the rural exodus and provide a certain level of material safety for the older and inactive left behind. Nevertheless, it can hardly be seen as a long-term reliable compensation for the migration of the young, active people from the rural areas or from their own countries. Concentrated efforts aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions prevailing in rural areas are indispensable, particularly considering the migrants' return to their country of origin.

39. Rural development should be seen as a key to the over-all problem of the aging in large parts of the world, as much as it is a key to balanced and integrated national progress in countries with an essentially agricultural economy. To some extent, policies to improve production and productivity in rural areas, to stimulate investment, create the necessary infrastructures, introduce appropriate technologies and provide basic services, could strengthen the generalized social security systems in force in other and more industrialized countries.

40. The slowly expanding life-span of the population even in developing areas constitutes a hidden resource for national economies which, if properly stimulated and utilized, might help to compensate for the exodus of younger people, decrease the real dependency ratios, and ensure the status of the rural elderly as active participants in national life and production, rather than as passive and vulnerable victims of development.

41. A desirable compensation for the emigration of young people to other countries would be an improvement in the continuity of social benefits in terms of contributive rights to a pension, including favourable provisions for financial transfers in whatever form the benefits are granted to migrant workers. This would be not only equitable, but also consistent with the stimulation of the development of the economy of the home country. Bilateral and multilateral social security agreements must be developed to this effect. Other measures should accompany these efforts, notably in terms of providing housing for repatriates. While aging migrants have the same needs as other elderly people, their migrant status gives rise to additional economic, social, cultural and spiritual needs. In addition, it

is important to recognize the role the older migrants could play in the support of their younger counterparts.

42. In countries with fully developed social security systems linked to compulsory retirement age levels, over-all aging is, and will continue to be, one of the most important structural factors affecting the composition of the labour force. This phenomenon should not be considered solely in terms of its repercussions on the elderly. Because of their sheer dimension and close interaction with other sectors and processes affecting the active labour force, retirement policies cannot be treated in an isolated manner as a separate phenomenon. For various countries the most visible relationship is that between arrangements for retirement and problems of unemployment, especially among young people about to enter the labour force.

43. Much has already been said about that relationship, and various governmental actions have been considered or taken to respond to it. Whatever the apparent wisdom of lowering retirement age levels in order to open up employment opportunities for the young, such action can hardly be seen as anything but a short-term and partial solution of one social problem through the creation of another, probably longer-lasting one. More innovative actions should be considered at both extremes of the labour force structure.

44. On the other hand, the wide varieties in personal interests and preferences among people approaching retirement age could, without too many administrative or organizational changes, be taken into account in a system of elastic retirement plans catering to the individual. Where retirement is preferred, different age levels for voluntary early retirement can be established with reduced benefits and counterbalanced by extended employment periods for those older persons whose job constitutes their main commitment, and occasionally their main reason for living. Other arrangements, such as part-time or occasional work or consultancies are already in use, especially at the higher technological and administrative levels, and could be extended to a greater part of the labour force. In order to implement this measure, provision should be made for training and retraining and the development of new skills.

45. The interrelationship between the employment and income needs of the young and the elderly raises particularly acute problems for women, whose longer life expectancy may mean an old age aggravated by economic need, isolation and with little or no prospects for paid employment.

46. Where social security systems based on accrued retirement benefits exist, the growth in the number and longevity of retired persons is now emerging as a major aspect of the husbandry of national economic resources, and is sometimes presented in terms of a gradual freezing of a large share of national wealth for so-called non-productive purposes. On the other hand, it will probably be recognized that the accumulation of retirement funds could constitute a stabilizing factor in the national economy, in the sense of providing for long-term and conservatively utilized sources of funding on a substantial scale, whose impact on otherwise fluctuating economic systems can be beneficial. In such systems, the purchasing power of the pensions paid should as far as possible be maintained.

47. Similarly, most pension payments from retirement funds represent deferred earnings by the individual retiree. The natural use of pension payments for immediate material needs rather than for long-term and insecure investments may also be a stimulating factor in societies heavily dependent on individual spending and consumption for their economic health.

48. Where formal retirement benefit systems do not yet exist, the economic implications of the aging of societies are for the time being largely negative, and will probably continue to be so, unless serious and far-reaching efforts are made to turn this liability into a potential benefit for the whole of society. Governmental initiatives to promote material development and social well-being, and international action to sustain such initiatives, could be taken jointly in an effort to prepare for the future of those approaching old age in areas where traditional structures of protection are about to dissolve.

3. Areas of concern to aging individuals

49. The recognition that all aspects of aging are interrelated implies the need for a co-ordinated approach to policies and research on the subject. Considering the aging process in its totality, as well as its interaction with the social and economic situation, requires an integrated approach within the framework of overall economic and social planning. Undue emphasis on specific sectoral problems would constitute a serious obstacle to the integration of aging policies and programmes into the broader development framework. Although the recommendations in the following narrative have been divided under broad headings, it should be recognized that there is a high degree of interdependence among them.

50. Within the framework of recognizing this interdependence, particular attention could be given to co-ordinating preventive efforts in order to combat the detrimental effects of premature aging. From birth onwards, the detrimental effects of premature aging on the individual could be avoided by:

- An educational effort designed specifically to make young people aware of the changes which will occur as they grow older;
- A healthy general life-style;
- Appropriate adjustments to working hours and conditions;
- Splitting up each individual's time and responsibilities among various types of activities so that he can have several different jobs as he grows older, and achieve the best possible balance between time spent in leisure, training and work;
- Constant adaptation of the man to his work and, more important, the work to the man, and changing the type of work in accordance with the changes in each person, in family circumstances, and in technological and economic development. In this sphere, occupational medicine and permanent education should play an essential role.

51. In resolution 1981/62, the Economic and Social Council called upon the Secretary-General to elaborate a set of general guidelines for consumer protection. Furthermore, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has adopted a Code of Ethics on International Trade in Food and the World Health Organization an International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes to protect children's health. Elderly consumers should be protected, since the good health, safety and well-being of the elderly are the objective of the World Assembly on Aging.

(a) Health and nutrition

52. While the rapidly increasing number of old people throughout the world represents a biological success for humanity, the living conditions of the elderly in most countries have by and large lagged behind those enjoyed by the economically active population. But health, that state of total physical, mental and social well-being, is the result of interaction between all the sectors which contribute to development.

53. Epidemiological studies suggest that successive cohorts of the elderly arriving at the same age have better levels of health, and it is expected that, as men and women live to increasingly greater ages, major disabilities will largely be compressed into a narrow age range just prior to death.

Recommendation 1

Care designed to alleviate the handicaps, re-educate remaining functions, relieve pain, maintain the lucidity, comfort and dignity of the affected and help them to re-orient their hopes and plans, particularly in the case of the elderly, are just as important as curative treatment.

Recommendation 2

The care of elderly persons should go beyond disease orientation and should involve their total well-being, taking into account the inter-dependence of the physical, mental, social, spiritual and environmental factors. Health care should therefore involve the health and social sectors and the family in improving the quality of life of older persons. Health efforts, in particular primary health care as a strategy, should be directed at enabling the elderly to lead independent lives in their own family and community for as long as possible instead of being excluded and cut off from all activities of society.

54. There is no doubt that, with advancing age, pathological conditions increase in frequency. Furthermore, the living conditions of the elderly make them more prone to risk factors that might have adverse effects on their health (e.g., social isolation and accidents) - factors that can be modified to a great extent. Research and practical experience have demonstrated that health maintenance in the elderly is possible and that diseases do not need to be essential components of aging.

Recommendation 3

Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment is required, as well as preventive measures, to reduce disabilities and diseases of the aging.

Recommendation 4

Particular attention should be given to providing health care to the very old, and to those who are incapacitated in their daily lives. This is particularly true when they are suffering from mental disorders or from failure to adapt to the environment; mental disorders could often be prevented or modified by means that do not require placement of the affected in institutions, such as training and supporting the family and volunteers by professional workers, promoting ambulant

mental health care, welfare work, day-care and measures aimed at the prevention of social isolation.

55. Some sectors of the aging, and especially the very old, will nevertheless continue to be vulnerable. Because they may be among the least mobile, this group is particularly in need of primary care from facilities located close to their residences and/or communities. The concept of primary health care incorporates the use of existing health and social services personnel, with the assistance of community health officers trained in simple techniques of caring for the elderly.

56. Early diagnosis and treatment are of prime importance in the prevention of mental illness in older people. Special efforts need to be taken to assist older persons who have mental health problems or who are at high risk in this respect.

57. Where hospital care is needed, application of the skills of geriatric medicine enables a patient's total condition to be assessed and, through the work of a multidisciplinary team, a programme of treatment and rehabilitation to be devised, which is geared to an early return to the community and the provision there of any necessary continuing care. All patients should receive in proper time any form of intensive treatment which they require, with a view to preventing complications and functional failure leading to permanent invalidity and premature death.

Recommendation 5

Attentive care for the terminally ill, dialogue with them and support for their close relatives at the time of loss and later require special efforts which go beyond normal medical practice. Health practitioners should aspire to provide such care. The need for these special efforts must be known and understood by those providing medical care and by the families of the terminally ill and by the terminally ill themselves. Bearing these needs in mind, exchange of information about relevant experiences and practices found in a number of cultures should be encouraged.

58. A proper balance between the role of institutions and that of the family in providing health care for the elderly - based on recognition of the family and the immediate community as elements in a well-balanced system of care - is important.

59. Existing social services and health-care systems for the aging are becoming increasingly expensive. Means of halting or reversing this trend and of developing social systems together with primary health care services need to be considered, in the spirit of the Declaration of Alma Ata.

Recommendation 6

The trend towards increased costs of social services and health-care systems should be offset through closer co-ordination between social welfare and health care services both at the national and community levels. For example, measures need to be taken to increase collaboration between personnel working in the two sectors and to provide them with interdisciplinary training. These systems should, however, be developed, taking into account the role of the family and community - which should remain the interrelated key elements in a well-balanced system of care. All this must be done without detriment to the standard of medical and social care of the elderly.

60. Those who give most direct care to the elderly are often the least trained, or have insufficient training for their purpose. To maintain the well-being and independence of the elderly through self-care, health promotion, prevention of disease and disability requires new orientation and skills, among the elderly themselves, as well as their families, and health and social welfare workers in the local communities.

Recommendation 7

(a) The population at large should be informed in regard to dealing with the elderly who require care. The elderly themselves should be educated in self-care;

(b) Those who work with the elderly at home, or in institutions, should receive basic training for their tasks, with particular emphasis on participation of the elderly and their families, and collaboration between workers in health and welfare fields at various levels;

(c) Practitioners and students in the human care professions (e.g. medicine, nursing, social welfare etc.) should be trained in principles and skills in the relevant areas of gerontology, geriatrics, psycho-geriatrics and geriatric nursing.

61. All too often, old age is an age of no consent. Decisions affecting aging citizens are frequently made without the participation of the citizens themselves. This applies particularly to those who are very old, frail or disabled. Such people should be served by flexible systems of care that give them a choice as to the type of amenities and the kind of care they receive.

Recommendation 8

The control of the lives of the aging should not be left solely to health, social service and other caring personnel, since aging people themselves usually know best what is needed and how it should be carried out.

Recommendation 9

Participation of the aged in the development of health care and the functioning of health services should be encouraged.

62. A fundamental principle in the care of the elderly should be to enable them to lead independent lives in the community for as long as possible.

Recommendation 10

Health and health-allied services should be developed to the fullest extent possible in the community. These services should include a broad range of ambulatory services such as: day-care centres, out-patient clinics, day hospitals, medical and nursing care and domestic services. Emergency services should be always available. Institutional care should always be appropriate to the needs of the elderly. Inappropriate use of beds in health care facilities should be avoided. In particular, those not mentally ill should not be placed in mental hospitals. Health screening and counselling should be offered through geriatric clinics, neighbourhood health centres or community sites where older persons congregate. The necessary health infrastructure and specialized staff to provide thorough and complete geriatric care should be made available. In the case of

institutional care, alienation through isolation of the aged from society should be avoided inter alia by further encouraging the involvement of family members and volunteers.

63. Nutritional problems, such as deficient quantity and inappropriate constituents, are encountered among the poor and underprivileged elderly in both the developed and the developing countries. Accidents are also a major risk area for the elderly. The alleviation of these problems may require a multisectoral approach.

Recommendation 11

The promotion of health, the prevention of disease and the maintaining of functional capacities among elderly persons should be actively pursued. For this purpose, an assessment of the physical, psychological and social needs of the group concerned is a prerequisite. Such an assessment would enhance the prevention of disability, early diagnosis and rehabilitation.

Recommendation 12

Adequate, appropriate and sufficient nutrition, particularly the adequate intake of protein, minerals and vitamins, is essential to the well-being of the elderly. Poor nutrition is exacerbated by poverty, isolation, maldistribution of food, and poor eating habits, including those due to dental problems. Therefore special attention should be paid to:

(a) Improvement of the availability of sufficient foodstuffs to the elderly through appropriate schemes and encouraging the aged in rural areas to play an active role in food production;

(b) A fair and equitable distribution of food, wealth, resources and technology;

(c) Education of the public, including the elderly, in correct nutrition and eating habits, both in urban and rural areas;

(d) Provision of health and dental services for early detection of malnutrition and improvement of mastication;

(e) Studies of the nutritional status of the elderly at the community level, including steps to correct any unsatisfactory local conditions;

(f) Extension of research into the role of nutritional factors in the aging process to communities in developing countries.

Recommendation 13

Efforts should be intensified to develop home care to provide high quality health and social services in the quantity necessary so that older persons are enabled to remain in their own communities and to live as independently as possible for as long as possible. Home care should not be viewed as an alternative to institutional care; rather, the two are complementary to each other and should so

link into the delivery system that older persons can receive the best care appropriate to their needs at the least cost.

Special support must be given to home care services, by providing them with sufficient medical, paramedical, nursing and technical facilities of the required standard to limit the need for hospitalization.

Recommendation 14

A very important question concerns the possibilities of preventing or at least postponing the negative functional consequences of aging. Many life-style factors may have their most pronounced effects during old age when the reserve capacity usually is lower.

The health of the aging is fundamentally conditioned by their previous health and, therefore, life-long health care starting with young age is of paramount importance; this includes preventive health, nutrition, exercise, the avoidance of health-harming habits and attention to environmental factors, and this care should be continued.

Recommendation 15

The health hazards of cumulative noxious substances - including radioactive and trace elements and other pollutions - assume a greater importance as life-spans increase and should, therefore, be the subject of special attention and investigation throughout the entire life-span.

Governments should promote the safe handling of such materials in use, and move rapidly to ensure that waste materials from such use are permanently and safely removed from man's biosphere.

Recommendation 16

As avoidable accidents represent a substantial cost both in human suffering and in resources, priority should be given to measures to prevent accidents in the home, on the road, and those precipitated by treatable medical conditions or by inappropriate use of medication.

Recommendation 17

International exchange and research co-operation should be promoted in carrying out epidemiological studies of local patterns of health and diseases and their consequences together with investigating the validity of different care delivery systems, including self-care, and home care by nurses, and in particular of ways of achieving optimum programme effectiveness; also investigating the demands for various types of care and developing means of coping with them paying particular attention to comparative studies regarding the achievement of objectives and relative cost-effectiveness; and gathering data on the physical, mental and social profiles of aging individuals in various social and cultural contexts, including attention to the special problems of access to services in rural and remote areas, in order to provide a sound basis for future actions.

(g) Protection of elderly consumers.

Recommendation 18

Governments should:

(a) Ensure that food and household products, installations and equipment conform to standards of safety that take into account the vulnerability of the aged;

(b) Encourage the safe use of medications, household chemicals and other products by requiring manufacturers to indicate necessary warnings and instructions for use;

(c) Facilitate the availability of medications, hearing aids, dentures, glasses and other prosthetics to the elderly so that they can prolong their activities and independence;

(d) Restrain the intensive promotion and other marketing techniques primarily aimed at exploiting the meagre resources of the elderly.

Government bodies should co-operate with non-governmental organizations on consumer education programmes.

The international organizations concerned are urged to promote collective efforts by their Member States to protect elderly consumers.

(c) Housing and environment

64. Adequate living accommodation and agreeable physical surroundings are necessary for the well-being of all people, and it is generally accepted that housing has a great influence on the quality of life of any age group in any country. Suitable housing is even more important to the elderly, whose abodes are the centre of virtually all of their activities. Adaptations to the home, the provision of practical domestic aids to daily living and appropriately designed household equipment can make it easier for those elderly people whose mobility is restricted or who are otherwise disabled to continue to live in their own homes.

65. The elderly meet manifold problems in traffic and transport. Especially elderly pedestrians have to cope with objective or subjectively felt dangers that restrict and limit their mobility and participatory aspirations. The traffic circumstances should be adapted to older people instead of the other way around. Measures and facilities should include traffic education, speed limits especially in human settlements, traffic-safe environments, accommodations and means of transport, etc.

Recommendation 19

Housing for the elderly must be viewed as more than mere shelter. In addition to the physical, it has psychological and social significance, which should be taken into account. To release the aged from dependence on others, national housing policies should pursue the following goals:

(a) Helping the aged to continue to live in their own homes as long as possible, provision being made for restoration and development and, where feasible and appropriate, the remodelling and improvement of homes and their adaptation to match the ability of the aged to get to and from them and use the facilities;

(b) Planning and introducing - under a housing policy that also provides for public financing and agreements with the private sector - housing for the aged of various types to suit the status and degree of self-sufficiency of the aged themselves, in accordance with local tradition and customs;

(c) Co-ordinating policies on housing with those concerned with community services (social, health, cultural, leisure, communications) so as to secure, whenever possible, an especially favourable position for housing the aged vis-à-vis dwellings for the population at large;

(d) Evolve and apply special policies and measures, and make arrangements so as to allow the aged to move about and to protect them from traffic hazards;

(e) Such a policy should, in turn, form part of the broader policy of support for the least well-off sectors of the population.

Recommendation 20

Urban rebuilding and development planning and law should pay special attention to the problems of the aging, assisting in securing their social integration.

Recommendation 21

National Governments should be encouraged to adopt housing policies that take into account the needs of the elderly and the socially disadvantaged. A living environment designed to support the functional capacities of this group and the socially disadvantaged should be an integral part of national guidelines for human settlements policies and action.

Recommendation 22

Special attention should be paid to environmental problems and to designing a living environment that would take into account the functional capacity of the elderly and facilitate mobility and communication through the provision of adequate means of transport.

The living environment should be designed, with support from Governments, local authorities and non-governmental organizations, so as to enable elderly people to continue to live, if they so wish, in locations that are familiar to them, where their involvement in the community may be of long standing and where they will have the opportunity to lead a rich, normal and secure life.

Recommendation 23

The growing incidence of crime in some countries against the elderly victimizes not only those directly involved, but the many older persons who become afraid to leave their homes. Efforts should be directed to law enforcement agencies and the elderly to increase their awareness of the extent and impact of crime against older persons.

Recommendation 24

Whenever possible, the aging should be involved in housing policies and programmes for the elderly population.

(d) Family

66. The family, regardless of its form or organization, is recognized as a fundamental unit of society. With increasing longevity, four- and five-generation families are becoming common throughout the world. The changes in the status of women, however, have reduced their traditional role as caretakers of older family members; it is necessary to enable the family as a whole, including its male members, to take over and share the burden of help in and by the family. Women are entering and remaining in the labour force for longer periods of time. Many who have completed their child-rearing roles become caught between the desire and need to work and earn income and the responsibility of caring for elderly parents or grandparents.

Recommendation 25

As the family is recognized as a fundamental unit of society, efforts should be made to support, protect and strengthen it in agreement with each society's system of cultural values and in responding to the needs of its aging members. Governments should promote social policies encouraging the maintenance of family solidarity among generations, with all members of the family participating. The

role and contribution of the non-governmental organizations in strengthening the family as a unit should also be stressed at all levels.

Recommendation 26

Appropriate support from the wider community, available when and where it is needed, can make a crucial difference to the willingness and ability of families to continue to care for elderly relatives. Planning and provision of services should take full account of the needs of those carers.

67. There is ample evidence of the high esteem in which older people are held in developing countries. Trends towards increasing industrialization and urbanization and greater mobility of the labour force indicate, however, that the traditional concept of the role of the elderly in the family is undergoing major change. World-wide, the over-all responsibility of the family to provide the traditional care and support needs of the aging is diminishing.

Recommendation 27

Ways to ensure continuity of the vital role of the family and the dignity, status and security of the aging, taking into account all the internal and international events which might influence this status of security, are issues that deserve careful consideration and action by Governments and non-governmental organizations. Recognizing the predominance of older women, and the relatively greater numbers of widows than widowers throughout the world, particular consideration should be given to the special needs and roles of this group.

Recommendation 28

Governments are urged to adopt an age/family-integrated approach to planning and development which would recognize the special needs and characteristics of older persons and their families. Older persons should be included in the governmental and other decision-making processes in the political, social, cultural and educational areas among others, and children should be encouraged to support their parents.

Recommendation 29

Governments and non-governmental bodies should be encouraged to establish social services to support the whole family when there are elderly people at home and to implement measures especially for low-income families who wish to keep elderly people at home.

(e) Social welfare

68. Social welfare services can be instruments of national policy and should have as their goal the maximizing of the social functioning of the aging. They should be community-based and provide a broad range of preventive, remedial and developmental services for the aging, to enable them to lead as independent a life as possible in their own home and in their community, remaining active and useful citizens.

69. In relation to elderly migrants appropriate measures should be taken to provide social welfare services in accordance with their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and other characteristics.

Recommendation 30

Social welfare services should have as their goal the creation, promotion and maintenance of active and useful roles for the elderly for as long as possible in and for the community.

70. In many countries where resources are scarce, there is a general lack of organized social welfare services, particularly in the rural areas. Although the role of governments in providing such services is paramount, the contribution of non-governmental organizations is also of great importance.

71. In traditional societies, old people have always enjoyed a privileged position based on respect, consideration, status and authority. But this is starting to be upset under the influence of modern trends and that privileged position is now being questioned. It is therefore time to become aware of these changes and on that basis to define national aging policies that would avoid some of the problems concerning the elderly faced by some developed countries.

Recommendation 31

Existing formal and informal organizations should consider the particular needs of the aging and allow for them in their programmes and future planning. The important role that co-operatives can play in providing services in this area should be recognized and encouraged. Such co-operatives could also benefit from the participation of elderly people as full members or consultants. A partnership should be formed between governments and non-governmental organizations designed to ensure a comprehensive, integrated, co-ordinated and multipurpose approach to meeting the social welfare needs of the elderly.

Recommendation 32

The involvement of young people - in providing services and care and in participating in activities for and with the elderly - should be encouraged, with a view to promoting intergenerational ties. Mutual self-help among the able and active elderly should be stimulated to the extent possible, as should the assistance this group can provide to its less fortunate peers, and the involvement of the elderly in informal part-time occupations.

Recommendation 33

Governments should endeavour to reduce or eliminate fiscal or other constraints on informal and voluntary activities, and eliminate or relax regulations which hinder or discourage part-time work, mutual self-help and the use of volunteers alongside professional staff in providing social services or in institutions for the elderly.

Recommendation 34

Whenever institutionalization is necessary or inevitable for elderly persons, the utmost effort must be made to ensure a quality of institutional life corresponding to normal conditions in their communities, with full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs, interests and privacy; States should be encouraged to define minimum standards to ensure higher quality of institutional care.

Recommendation 35

In order to facilitate mutual help among the elderly and let their voices be heard, governments and non-governmental bodies should encourage the establishment and free initiative of groups and movements of elderly persons and also give other age groups opportunities for training in, and information on, the support of the elderly.

(f) Income security and employment

72. Major differences exist between the developed and the developing countries - and particularly between urban, industrialized and rural, agrarian economies - with regard to the achievement of policy goals related to income security and employment. Many developed countries have achieved universal coverage through generalized social security schemes. For the developing countries, where many if not the majority of persons, live at subsistence levels, income security is an issue of concern for all age groups. In several of these countries, the social security programmes launched tend to offer limited coverage: in the rural areas, where in many cases most of the population lives, there is little or no coverage. Furthermore, particular attention should be paid, in social security and social programmes, to the circumstances of the elderly women whose income is generally lower than men's and whose employment has often been broken up by maternity and family responsibilities. In the long term, policies should be directed towards providing social insurance for women in their own right.

Recommendation 36

Governments should take appropriate action to ensure to all older persons an appropriate minimum income, and should develop their economies to benefit all the population. To this end, they should:

(a) Create or develop social security schemes based on the principle of universal coverage for older people. Where this is not feasible, other approaches should be tried, such as payment of benefits in kind, or direct assistance to families and local co-operative institutions;

(b) Ensure that the minimum benefits will be enough to meet the essential needs of the elderly and guarantee their independence. Whether or not social security payments are calculated taking into account previous income, efforts should be made to maintain their purchasing power. Ways should be explored to protect the savings of the elderly against the effects of inflation. In determining the age at which pensions are payable, due account should be taken of the age of retirement, changes in the national demographic structure and of the national economic capacity. At the same time, efforts should be made to achieve continuous economic growth;

(c) In social security systems, make it possible for women as well as men to acquire their own rights;

(d) Within the social security system and if necessary by other means, respond to the special needs of income security for older workers who are unemployed or those who are incapable of working;

(e) Other possibilities of making available supplementary retirement income and incentives to develop new means of personal savings for the elderly should be explored.

73. Broadly related to the issues of income security are the dual issues of the right to work and the right to retire. In most areas of the world, efforts by older persons to participate in work and economic activities which will satisfy their need to contribute to the life of the community and benefit society as a whole meet with difficulties. Age discrimination is prevalent: many older workers are unable to remain in the labour force or to re-enter it because of age prejudice. In some countries this situation tends to impact women more severely. The integration of the aged into the machinery of development affects both the urban and rural population groups.

Recommendation 37

Governments should facilitate the participation of older persons in the economic life of the society. For that purpose:

(a) Appropriate measures should be taken, in collaboration with employers' and workers' organizations, to ensure to the maximum extent possible that older workers can continue to work under satisfactory conditions and enjoy security of employment;

(b) Governments should eliminate discrimination in the labour market and ensure equality of treatment in professional life. Negative stereotypes about older workers exist among some employers. Governments should take steps to educate employers and employment counsellors about the capabilities of older workers, which remain quite high in most occupations. Older workers should also enjoy equal access to orientation, training and placement facilities and services;

(c) Measures should be taken to assist older persons to find or return to independent employment by creating new employment possibilities and facilitating training or retraining. The right of older workers to employment should be based on ability to perform the work rather than chronological age.

(d) Despite the significant unemployment problems facing many nations, in particular with regard to young people, the retirement age for employees should not be lowered except on a voluntary basis.

Recommendation 38

Older workers, like all other workers, should enjoy satisfactory working conditions and environment. Where necessary, measures should be taken to prevent industrial and agricultural accidents and occupational diseases. Working conditions and the working environment, as well as the scheduling and organization of work, should take into account the characteristics of older workers.

Recommendation 39

Proper protection for workers, which permits better follow-up for people of advanced age, comes about through a better knowledge of occupational diseases. This necessarily entails training medical staff in occupational medicine.

Similarly, pre-retirement medical checks would allow the effects of occupational disease upon the individual to be detected and appropriate steps to be planned.

Recommendation 40

Governments should take or encourage measures that will ensure a smooth and gradual transition from active working life to retirement, and in addition make the age of entitlement to a pension more flexible. Such measures would include pre-retirement courses and lightening the work-load during the last years of the working life, for example by modifying the conditions of work and the working environment of the work organization and by promoting a gradual reduction of work-time.

Recommendation 41

Governments should apply internationally adopted standards concerning older workers, particularly those embodied in Recommendation 162 of the International Labour Organisation. In addition, at the international level, approaches and guidelines concerning the special needs of these workers should continue to be developed.

Recommendation 42

In the light of ILO Convention No. 157 concerning maintenance of social security rights, measures should be taken, particularly through bilateral or multilateral conventions, to guarantee to legitimate migrant workers full social coverage in the receiving country as well as maintenance of social security rights acquired, especially regarding pensions, if they return to their country of origin. Similarly, migrant workers returning to their countries should be afforded special conditions facilitating their reintegration, particularly with regard to housing.

Recommendation 43

As far as possible, groups of refugees accepted by a country should include elderly persons as well as adults and children, and efforts should be made to keep family groups intact and to ensure that appropriate housing and services are provided.

(g) Education

74. The scientific and technological revolutions of the twentieth century have led to a knowledge and information "explosion". The continuing and expanding nature of these revolutions has given rise also to accelerated social change. In many of the world's societies, the elderly still serve as the transmitters of information, knowledge, tradition and spiritual values: this important tradition should not be lost.

Recommendation 44

Educational programmes featuring the elderly as the teachers and transmitters of knowledge, culture and spiritual values should be developed.

75. In many instances, the knowledge explosion is resulting in information obsolescence, with, in turn, implications of social obsolescence. These changes suggest that the educational structures of society must be expanded to respond to the educational needs of an entire life-span. Such an approach to education would suggest the need for continuous adult education, including preparation for aging

and the creative use of time. In addition, it is important that the aging, along with the other age groups, have access to basic literacy education, as well as to all education facilities available in the community.

Recommendation 45

As a basic human right, education must be made available without discrimination against the elderly. Educational policies should reflect the principle of the right to education of the aging, through the appropriate allocation of resources and in suitable education programmes. Care should be taken to adapt educational methods to the capacities of the elderly, so that they may participate equitably in and profit from any education provided. The need for continuing adult education at all levels should be recognized and encouraged. Consideration should be given to the idea of university education for the elderly.

76. There is also a need to educate the general public with regard to the aging process. Such education must start at an early age in order that aging should be fully understood as a natural process. The importance of the role of the mass media in this respect cannot be overstated.

Recommendation 46

A co-ordinated effort by the mass media should be undertaken to highlight the positive aspects of the aging process and of the aging themselves. This effort should cover, among other things:

- (a) The present situation of the aged, in particular in rural areas of developed and developing countries, with a view to identifying and responding to their real needs;
- (b) The effects of migration (both internal and international) on the relative aging of populations of rural areas, and its effects on agricultural production and living conditions in these areas;
- (c) Methods to develop job opportunities for and adapt conditions of work to older workers. This would include developing or furnishing simple equipment and tools which would help those with limited physical strength to accomplish their assigned tasks;
- (d) Surveys of the role of education and aging in various cultures and societies.

Recommendation 47

In accordance with the concept of life-long education promulgated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), informal, community-based and recreation-oriented programmes for the aging should be promoted in order to help them develop a sense of self-reliance and community responsibility. Such programmes should enjoy the support of national Governments and international organizations.

Recommendation 48

Governments and international organizations should support programmes aimed at providing the elderly with easier physical access to cultural institutions

(museums, theatres, opera houses, concert halls, cinemas etc.) in order to encourage their greater participation in leisure activities and the creative use of their time. Furthermore, cultural centres should be asked to organize for and with the elderly workshops in such fields as handicrafts, fine arts and music, where the elderly can play an active role both as audience and participants.

Recommendation 49

Governments and international organizations concerned with the problems of aging should initiate programmes aimed at educating the general public with regard to the aging process and the aging. Such activities should start from early childhood and continue through all levels of the formal school system. The role and involvement of ministries of education in this respect should be strengthened in encouraging and facilitating the inclusion of aging in curricula, as an aspect of normal development and education for the life of individuals beginning with the youngest age; so leading to greater knowledge of the subject and to possible positive change in the stereotypical attitudes to aging of present generations. Non-formal channels and the mass media should also be used to develop such programmes. The mass media should also be used as a means of promoting the participation of the aged in social, cultural and educational activities within the community; conversely, the aged or their representatives should be involved in formulating and designing these activities.

Recommendation 50

Where stereotypes of the aging person exist, efforts by the media, educational institutions, Governments, non-governmental organizations and the aging themselves should be devoted to overcoming the stereotyping of older persons as always manifesting physical and psychological disabilities, incapable of functioning independently and having neither role nor status in society. These efforts are necessary for achieving an age-integrated society.

Recommendation 51

Comprehensive information on all aspects of their lives should be made available to the aging in a clear and understandable form.

B. Promotion policies and programmes

77. The full realization of the Plan of Action depends on the implementation of all international documents, strategies and plans, mentioned in paragraphs 4 and 5. In promoting policies and programmes within the framework of the Plan of Action, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, the United Nations Development Programme, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the regional commissions as well as the specialized agencies, institutions and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are urged to give maximum assistance to all countries at their request. Full use should also be made of opportunities existing for technical co-operation between developed and developing countries in the field of aging.

1. Data collection and analysis

78. Data concerning the older sector of the population - collected through

censuses, surveys or vital statistics systems - are essential for the formulation, application and evaluation of policies and programmes for the elderly and for ensuring their integration in the development process.

79. Governments and organizations that are in a position to do so should develop an information base which would be more specific than the "sixty-and-over" one now in use and which would be of help in planning the development of and solving problems concerning the elderly. The base could cover social, age, functional and economic classifications, among others.

80. Household sample and other surveys and other sources of demographic and related socio-economic statistics provide important data for use in formulating and implementing policies and programmes for the elderly.

81. All countries that so request should be provided with the technical assistance needed to develop or improve data bases relating to their elderly and the services and institutions that concern them. The assistance should cover training and research in methodologies for collecting, processing and analysing data.

Recommendation 52

Data concerning the aging could be developed along the line of a codification system which will give national Governments information tabulated by sex, age, income levels, living arrangements, health status and degree of self care, among others. Such data could be collected through the census, micro or pilot census or representative surveys. Governments are urged to allocate resources for that purpose.

Recommendation 53

Governments and institutions concerned should establish or improve existing information exchange facilities, such as data banks in the field of aging.

2. Training and education

82. The dramatic increase in the number and proportion of older adults calls for a significant increase in training. A dual approach is needed: an international programme for training concomitant with national and regional training programmes that are particularly relevant to conditions in the countries and regions concerned. The needs of the elderly, as well as the implications of the aging of the population for development, need to be taken into account in developing education and training policies and programmes for all ages, especially the younger generation.

Recommendation 54

Education and training programmes should be interdisciplinary in nature, as aging and the aging of the population is a multidisciplinary issue. Education and training in the various aspects of aging and the aging of the population should not be restricted to high levels of specialization, but should be made available at all levels. Efforts should be made to regulate the training skills and educational requirements for different functions in the field of aging.

83. The exchange of skills, knowledge and experience among countries with similar or comparable structures and composition, or having historical, cultural,

linguistic or other links, with respect to their aging population would be a particularly fertile form of international co-operation. Besides the transfer of specific skills and technologies, the exchange of experience regarding the wide array of practices relating to aging could also constitute an area for technical co-operation among developing countries. In regions which include both developed and developing countries side by side, the rich opportunities for mutual learning and co-operation in training and research should be vigorously explored.

Recommendation 55

Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations should take the necessary measures to develop trained personnel in the field of aging, and should strengthen their efforts to disseminate information on aging, and particularly to the aging themselves.

Recommendation 56

Retirees' and elderly people's organizations should be involved in planning and carrying out such exchanges of information.

Recommendation 57

The implementation of several recommendations will require trained personnel in the field of aging. Practical training centres should be promoted and encouraged, where appropriate facilities already exist, to train such personnel, especially from developing countries, who would in their turn train others. These centres would also provide updating and refresher courses and act as a practical bridge between and among developed and developing regions; they would be linked with appropriate United Nations agencies and facilities.

Recommendation 58

At national, regional and international levels, extra attention should be given to research and study undertaken in support of integrating the problems of aging in planning and policy formulation and management.

Recommendation 59

Training in all aspects of gerontology and geriatrics should be encouraged and given due prominence at all levels in all educational programmes. Governments and competent authorities are called upon to encourage new or existing institutions to pay special attention to appropriate training in gerontology and geriatrics.

3. Research

84. The Plan of Action gives high priority to research related to developmental and humanitarian aspects of aging. Research activities are instrumental in formulating, evaluating and implementing policies and programmes: (a) as to the implications of the aging of the population for development and (b) as to the needs of the aging. Research into the social, economic and health aspects of aging should be encouraged to achieve efficient uses of resources, improvement in social and health measures, including the prevention of functional decline, age-related disabilities, illness and poverty, and co-ordination of the services involved in the care of the aging.

85. The knowledge obtained by research provides scientific backing for a sounder basis for effective societal planning as well as for improving the well-being of the elderly. Further research is required, e.g. (a) to narrow the wide gaps in knowledge about aging and about the particular needs of the aging, and (b) to enable resources provided for the aging to be used more effectively. There should be emphasis on the continuum of research from the discovery of new knowledge to its vigorous and more rapid application and transfer of technological knowledge with due consideration of cultural and social diversity.

Recommendation 60

Research should be conducted into the developmental and humanitarian aspects of aging at local, national, regional and global levels. Research should be encouraged particularly in the biological, mental and social fields. Issues of basic and applied research of universal interest to all societies include:

- (a) The role of genetic and environmental factors;
- (b) The impact of biological, medical, cultural, societal and behavioural factors on aging;
- (c) The influence of economic and demographic factors (including migration) on societal planning;
- (d) The use of skills, expertise, knowledge and cultural potential of the aging;
- (e) The postponement of negative functional consequences of aging;
- (f) Health and social services for the aging as well as studies of co-ordinated programmes;
- (g) Training and education.

Such research should be generally planned and carried out by researchers closely acquainted with national and regional conditions, being granted the independence necessary for innovation and diffusion. States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations should carry out more research and studies on the developmental and humanitarian aspects of aging, co-operate in this field and exchange their findings in order to provide a logical basis for policies related to aging in general.

Recommendation 61

States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations should encourage the establishment of institutions specializing in the teaching of gerontology, geriatrics and geriatric psychology in countries where such institutions do not exist.

Recommendation 62

International exchange and research co-operation as well as data collection should be promoted in all fields having a bearing on aging, in order to provide a rational basis for future social policies and action. Special emphasis should be placed on comparative and crosscultural studies on aging. Interdisciplinary approaches should be stressed.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A. Role of Governments

86. The success of this Plan of Action will depend largely on action undertaken by Governments to create conditions and broad possibilities for full participation of the citizens, particularly the elderly. To this end, Governments are urged to devote more attention to the question of aging and to utilize fully the support provided by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including retirees' and elderly people's organizations.

87. Since wide divergencies exist with respect to the situation of the aging in various societies, cultures and regions - as reflected in different needs and problems - each country should decide upon its own national strategy and identify its own targets and priorities within the Plan. A clear commitment should be made at all levels of Government to take appropriate action to achieve those targets and give effect to those priorities.

88. Governments can play an important role with regard to the Plan of Action by evaluating and assessing the aging process from the individual and demographic points of view, in order to determine the implications for development of these processes in the light of the prevailing political, social, cultural, religious and economic situation.

89. The architects of national policies and strategies for the implementation of the Plan of Action should recognize that the aging are not a homogeneous group and be sensitive to the wide differences and needs of the aging at various stages of their lives. Governments should pay special attention to improving the lot of elderly women, who are often at a severe disadvantage.

90. The establishment of interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery within Governments can be an effective means of ensuring that the question of the aging of the population is taken into account in national development planning, that the needs of the elderly are given the attention they merit, and that the elderly are fully integrated into society.

91. These actions will gain in effectiveness if their preparation, implementation and follow-up are well co-ordinated at various geopolitical levels. The co-ordination must flow from co-operation between those in positions of responsibility in all sectors and the representatives of pensioners and the aged, in order to ensure the participation of the latter when decisions of direct concern to them are being taken. Hence, it would be appropriate to consider the setting up of corresponding planning, programming and co-ordinating bodies at the national level.

92. In certain countries, some of the objectives of the Plan of Action have already been achieved; in others they may only be accomplished progressively. Moreover, by their very nature, some measures will take longer to implement than others. Governments are urged, therefore, to establish short-, medium- and long-term objectives with a view to facilitating implementation of the Plan, in the light of their resources and priorities.

93. Governments should, if necessary, retain in a suitable form (or encourage the formation of) the mechanisms established at the national level to prepare for the

World Assembly on Aging, in order to be ready to facilitate the planning, implementation and evaluation of the activities recommended by the World Assembly.

B. Role of international and regional co-operation

1. Global action

94. International co-operation in the implementation of the programme of action on the establishment inter alia of a new international economic order and of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, based on the peaceful co-existence of States having different social systems, is essential to achieving the goals of the Plan of Action and can take the form of bilateral and multilateral co-operation between Governments and by utilizing the United Nations system. Such co-operation could take the form of direct assistance (technical or financial), in response to national or regional requests, co-operative research, or the exchange of information and experience.

95. The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and all its appropriate subsidiary bodies, in particular the Commission for Social Development, the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, and the legislative and policy-making bodies of the concerned specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations are urged to give careful consideration to the Plan of Action and to ensure an appropriate response to it.

96. In view of the role that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs has been playing within the United Nations system in matters related to the aging, it should be strengthened in order to continue to serve as the focal point for activities in that respect; to this end the Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested, within the existing global resources of the United Nations, to give due consideration to the provision of appropriate increased resources for the implementation of the Plan of Action, which will be primarily at the national level.

97. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination should consider the implications of the Plan of Action for the United Nations system with a view to continued liaison and co-ordination in implementing the provisions of the Plan.

98. The need to develop new guidelines in areas of concern to the elderly should be kept constantly under review in relation to the implementation of the Plan.

99. Governments, national and local non-governmental voluntary organizations and international non-governmental organizations are urged to join in the co-operative effort to accomplish the objectives of the Plan. They should strengthen their activities by encouraging the formation of and utilizing regular channels of communication at the national level for consulting with the elderly on policies and programmes that affect their lives. Governments are also urged to encourage and, where possible, support national and private organizations dealing with matters concerning the elderly and the aging of the population.

100. All States are invited to consider designating a national "Day for the Aging" in conformity with General Assembly resolution 36/20 of 9 November 1981.

101. The International Plan of Action on Aging should be brought to the attention of the appropriate United Nations bodies responsible for preparations for the

International Conference on Population (1984), so that its conclusions and recommendations could be taken into account in preparing the proposals for the further implementation of the World Population Plan of Action.

(a) Technical co-operation

102. The United Nations, and in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, together with the specialized agencies, should carry out technical co-operation activities in support of the objectives of the Plan of Action. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should continue to promote, and provide substantive support to, all such activities.

103. The voluntary Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging, established by General Assembly resolution 35/129, should be used, as requested by the General Assembly, to meet the rapidly increasing needs of the aging in the developing countries, in particular in the least developed ones. The payment of voluntary public and private contributions should be encouraged. The Trust Fund should be administered by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

104. Furthermore, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/20, the Fund should be used to encourage greater interest in the developing countries in matters related to aging and to assist the Governments of these countries, at their request, in formulating and implementing policies and programmes for the elderly. It should also be used for technical co-operation and research related to the aging of populations and for promoting co-operation among developing countries in the exchange of the relevant information and technology.

105. Aging is a population issue which affects development and which requires increasing international assistance and co-operation and, therefore, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities is urged, in co-operation with all organizations responsible for international population assistance, to continue and to strengthen its assistance in that field, particularly in developing countries.

(b) Exchange of information and experience

106. The exchange of information and experience at the international level is an effective means of stimulating progress and encouraging the adoption of measures to respond to the economic and social implications of the aging of the population, and to meet the needs of older persons. Countries with different political, economic and social systems and cultures and at different stages of development have benefited from the common knowledge of problems, difficulties and achievements and from solutions worked out jointly.

107. Meetings and seminars have proved to be most valuable in providing a regional and international exchange of information and experience and should be continued. These could focus, inter alia, on promoting technical co-operation among developing countries and on monitoring the implementation of the Plan of Action.

108. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should co-ordinate the activities of regional and subregional research and development centres in the United Nations system, promote the preparation of information materials, as well as the constant exchange of information on problems and policies related to aging and

the training of personnel, and facilitate activities related to technical co-operation among developing countries in collaboration with concerned Governments and regions.

109. With respect to the exchange of information about matters concerning aging, it is essential that standardized definitions, terms and research methodologies be developed; the United Nations should treat these matters with all due importance.

110. The United Nations bodies concerned should encourage Governments and the international community to pay special attention to developing programmes, projects and activities that will give older persons the skills, training and opportunities necessary to improve their situation and enable them to participate fully and effectively in the total development effort. Special attention should be given to training courses in technologies that will enable older persons to continue to work in agriculture.

111. The International Plan of Action on Aging should be transmitted to the unit in the United Nations Secretariat responsible for International Youth Year (1985) in order that that unit may bring the recommendations and conclusions of the World Assembly on Aging - particularly as they relate to intergenerational matters - to the attention of national planning committees concerned with developing ideas for the Youth Year.

(c) Formulation and implementation of international guidelines

112. The appropriate organizations should undertake studies on and review periodically the effectiveness of existing international guidelines and instruments related to the subject of aging, in order to determine their adequacy in the light of changing conditions in the modern world and the experience gained since their adoption.

2. Regional action

113. Effective implementation of the Plan will also require action at the regional level. All institutions having regional mandates are therefore called upon to review the objectives of the Plan and contribute to their implementation. In this respect, a central role should be played by the United Nations regional commissions.

114. In order to carry out the above-mentioned functions, Governments members of regional commissions should take steps to ensure that their regular programme of activities take into account the problems of aging.

115. Furthermore, in co-ordination with the conduct of the international review discussed above, the regional commission should organize the periodic review of regional plans.

C. Assessment, review and appraisal

116. It is essential that assessment, evaluation and review should take place at the national level, at intervals to be determined by each country.

117. Regional appraisal and review should focus on the special role regional action can play and the particular advantages it can offer in such fields as training, research and technical co-operation among developing countries.

118. It is recommended that the Commission for Social Development should be designated the intergovernmental body to review the implementation of the Plan of Action every four years and to make proposals for updating the Plan as considered necessary. The findings of this exercise should be transmitted through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly for consideration. To assist the Commission in its work it should be provided with periodic reports on progress made within the United Nations system in achieving the goals and objectives of the Plan. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should serve as the co-ordinator of this process.

B. RESOLUTIONS AND DECISION OF THE WORLD ASSEMBLY

Resolution

1. Aging people in Lebanon
2. Expression of gratitude to the Government and people of Austria

Decision

Report of the Credentials Committee

1. Aging people in Lebanon

The World Assembly on Aging,

Deeply concerned by the vulnerability of the elderly in situations of armed conflict and aggression,

Deeply disturbed by the Israeli aggression against Lebanese and Palestinian people which has once again acutely brought to the attention of the international community the vulnerability of the civilian population and in particular the elderly,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Recalling further Article 14 of the Geneva Convention of 1949 and other international instruments on the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict,

1. Condemns military aggression on civilian areas inhabited by Lebanese and Palestinian families as well as the use of weapons of mass destruction like cluster bombs which cause indiscriminate casualties among innocent victims particularly among the elderly;

2. Urges Member States to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and to safeguard all civilian population including in particular the elderly, during periods of tension and armed conflict;

3. Requests the General Assembly to take necessary measures which would declare institutions for the elderly as "immune protected areas" in situations of armed conflict and aggression, as is the case of hospitals, Red Cross facilities, etc.;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to call upon Israel to permit the Arab refugees who are 60 years old and over to rejoin immediately their extended and dispersed families in the occupied Arab territories;

5. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session on the action taken to implement this resolution.

15th plenary meeting

5 August 1982

2. Expression of gratitude to the Government and people of Austria

The World Assembly on Aging,

Having met at the Hofburg Congress Centre, Vienna, from 26 July to 6 August 1982 at the invitation of the Government of Austria,

1. Expresses its profound gratitude to the Government of Austria for the facilities generously placed at its disposal and for the efficiency and courtesy of the Austrian authorities and their personnel that were concerned with the physical arrangements for the Assembly;

2. Expresses its sincere appreciation also to the Government and people of Austria and to the authorities and population of Vienna for the hospitality shown to participants in the Assembly;

3. Decides that, to mark the association of the capital of Austria with the elaboration of the plan of action adopted by the Assembly, the plan shall be known as the "Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging, 1982".

17th plenary meeting

6 August 1982

Decision

Report of the Credentials Committee

At its 15th plenary meeting on 5 August 1982 the World Assembly approved the report of the Credentials Committee.

Notes

- 1/ Report of the United Nations World Population Conference, Bucharest, 19-30 August 1974 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.XIII.3), chap. I.
- 2/ Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 19 June-2 July 1975 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.1), chap. I.
- 3/ Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, 14-30 July 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.IV.3 and corrigendum), chap. I, sect. A.
- 4/ World Health Organization, Health Care: Report of the International Conference on Primary Health Care, Alma-Ata, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics 6-12 September 1978 (Geneva, 1978).
- 5/ Report of HABITAT: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 31 May-11 June 1976 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.7 and corrigendum), chap. I.
- 6/ Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.II.A.14 and corrigendum).
- 7/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, Vienna, 20-31 August 1979 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.II.21 and corrigendum), chap. VII.
- 8/ Report of the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, Geneva, 14-25 August 1978 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XIV.2), chap. II.
- 9/ General Assembly resolution 34/24, annex.
- 10/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), chap. I.
- 11/ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Rome 12-20 July 1979 (WCARRD/REP), part one; transmitted to the members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/34/485).
- 12/ See A/36/471/Add.1, annex, sect. II.
- 13/ General Assembly resolution 35/171, annex.

Annex I

TEXT OF MESSAGES ADDRESSED TO THE WORLD ASSEMBLY BY HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT

1. Message from His Holiness Pope John Paul II

On various occasions in the past, the Holy See has hailed with great interest and hope the United Nations initiative of convening a World Assembly on the problem of the aging of the population and its consequences for each individual and thus for society. Since that decision was confirmed, we have witnessed the expansion and deepening of an awareness of this demographic phenomenon of our times, which forces countries and the international community to think about the specific fate, needs, rights and abilities of the older generations, whose numbers are growing constantly. Beyond individuals, this reflection should extend to the very organization of society in relation to this stratum of its population.

A careful study of the preparatory work for this World Assembly and the Plan of Action submitted for consideration to all States Members of the United Nations disclosed several points which the Holy See particularly endorses. These are: attention given to older persons as such and to the quality of their life today; respect for their rights to remain active members in a society which they have helped to build; the will to promote a social organization in which each generation can make its contribution together with the others; and, lastly, the appeal to the creativity of each socio-cultural environment, in order to evoke responses that will satisfy the need to keep the elderly engaged in activities corresponding to the great diversity of their origin and education, abilities and experience, culture and beliefs. These themes indicate that not just abstract or technical problems are at stake but the fate of human beings, each having his own history, family roots, social bonds and occupational successes or failures, which have characterized or still characterize their lives.

To this important Assembly, which is dealing with these realities in order to explore them in depth and find practical and judicious solutions, the Church would like to offer the contribution of its reflection, its experience and its faith in mankind. More specifically, it offers its human and Christian vision of old age, its conviction regarding the family or family-type institutions as the most propitious setting for the well-being of the aged, and its support for the commitment of modern society to the service of the older generations.

I

I recall with emotion my meeting with old people in November 1980 at Munich Cathedral. I emphasized, on that occasion, that human old age was a natural stage of life and that it should generally be its consummation. This vision implies, obviously, that old age - when a person attains it - should be understood as an element having its own particular value within a human life as a whole, and its also requires a precise conception of the human being as having both a body and a soul. It is from this point of view that the Bible often speaks of advanced age or of the aged with respect and admiration. The Book of Ecclesiasticus, for example, after praising wisdom associated with the hoary head (chap. 25, verses 4-6),

continues with a long panegyric of the ancestors whose "bodies are buried in peace, but their name lives for evermore" (cf. chaps. 44-51). The New Testament likewise contains numerous passages speaking of old age in venerable terms. Saint Luke paints with emotion the picture of the old man Simeon and the prophetess Anne welcoming Christ to the Temple. At the time of the early Christian communities, we see the Apostles appointing elders to watch over their young foundations. The Church greatly hopes that the Plan of Action will admit this concept of old age envisaged as not only an inexorable process of biological deterioration or as a period separate from the other seasons of life but as a possible phase in the natural development of the life of every human being, of which it represents the culmination.

In truth, life is God's gift to man, who is created by love in His image and in His likeness. If the sacred dignity of the human person is understood in this way, it follows that a value attaches to all the stages of life. For reasons of consistency and justice alone, it is surely impossible to value truly the life of an old man without valuing truly the life of a child from the commencement of its conception. If life ceased to be respected as an inalienable and sacred possession, the consequences would be incalculable. It must, therefore, be resolutely affirmed, as did the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its Declaration on Euthanasia of 5 May 1980, that nothing and nobody can authorize the termination of the life of an innocent human being, foetus or embryo, child or adult, old person, incurable or dying invalid, and that any such act is a violation of the divine law, an offence against the dignity of the human person, a crime against life, an outrage against humanity. It is very fitting to mention that the same Declaration, in referring to the use of therapeutic methods, went on to say that it is today very important to protect, at the moment of death, the dignity of the human person and the Christian concept of life against techniques that may lend themselves to malpractice. Death is a part of our human horizon and gives it its true and mysterious dimension. The modern world, particularly the Western world, needs to learn to reintegrate death in human life. Surely, there is no one who does not wish that his fellow human beings, and himself, may be able to accept and accomplish that last act of earthly existence with that dignity and that serenity which are assuredly possible for believers.

I would like now to take a look, with you, at the characteristics of advanced age. Some are painful and difficult to accept, especially for a person who is alone. The others are a source of riches, for oneself and for others. Together, they form part of the human experience of those who are old today and of those who will be old tomorrow.

The fundamental aspects of the third and fourth ages tend, naturally, towards the weakening of physical strength, a lessened alertness of the mental faculties, gradual decline of activities to which one was attached, diseases and infirmities which ensue and the prospect of the emotional separations entailed by the departure for the hereafter. These saddening characteristics may be transformed by philosophical convictions and, in particular, by the certainties of the faith for those fortunate enough to be believers. For them, the final stage of earthly life may be lived as a mysterious accompanying of Christ the Redeemer on his tragic Journey of the Cross before the radiant dawn of Easter. However, more broadly, it may be stated that the way in which a civilization accepts old age and death as a constituent element of life and the way in which it helps its older members to live their death are a decisive criterion of the respect which that society has for man.

Old age also has its favourable aspects. It is the time when men and women may reap the harvest of the experience of their whole life, make an apportionment between what is essential and what is subsidiary and attain a level of great wisdom and deep serenity. It is the period when they can devote a great deal of time, or even all their time, to loving their familiars or casual acquaintances with the disinterestedness, patience and discreet joy so admirably displayed by many old people. It is also, for believers, the blessed opportunity of meditating on the splendours of the faith and of intensified prayer.

The rich promise of these values and their survival are linked to two inseparable conditions. First, the elderly themselves must whole-heartedly accept their age and appreciate its potential. The second condition is that modern society must become capable of recognizing the moral, emotional and religious values enshrined in the mind and heart of the old, and it must strive for their integration in our civilization, which suffers from a disturbing gap between its technical level and its ethical level. Old people can live only with difficulty in a world which has lost its awareness of its spiritual dimension. They lose their self-esteem when they see that what matters most is the citizen's monetary worth and that other resources of the human being are slighted or looked down upon. Such a climate is at variance with the well-being and fruitfulness of old age and necessarily engenders withdrawal, the painful feeling of uselessness and, ultimately, despair. It must be stressed once again, however, that it is the whole of society which deprives itself of enriching and regulating elements when it presumes to recognize only its young and adult members in full possession of their strength as sound assets for its development and to rank the others among the unproductive, whereas numerous experiments, scientifically conducted, prove the contrary.

II

In my apostolic exhortation Familiaris consortio, I said that, because of the divine origin of the human family, its essence and purposes are defined by love: "... established as an 'intimate community of life and love', the family ... has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love ... All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, day by day, the communion of persons, making the family 'a school of deeper humanity'" (paras. 17 and 21).

This offers a prospect of the opportunities which the family affords to the elderly, in terms of both the faithful support which they are entitled to expect from it and their potential contribution to the life and function of the family. Admittedly, the conditions for the integration of the elderly into the households of their children or other relatives do not always exist, and sometimes such an integration is even impossible. In such cases some other solution must be considered, but the children or other family members have a duty to maintain regular and warm contact with those who have to enter a home for the aged. However, there is no doubt that, when the aged continue to live with their families, they can give family members the benefit of affection and wisdom, understanding and indulgence, advice and comfort, faith and prayer, which are for the most part the special gifts of those in the evening of life. In so doing, they also help to restore to honour, above all by their example, qualities that are often undervalued today, such as being a good listener, self-effacement, serenity, generosity, inwardness and discreet and radiant joy. Furthermore, the regular or

occasional presence of the elderly among their family is often an invaluable means of promoting contact and understanding between generations, which are necessarily diverse and complementary. This strengthening of family ties, as I have just described it and within the scope of what is possible, can be a source of stability and vitality, of humanity and spirituality for this basic unit of every society, which is called by the most richly evocative name in all the world's languages: "the family".

III

Current population trends present society with a new field in which it can serve the human person by guaranteeing to the elderly their rightful place in the community and fostering their specific contribution to its development.

The older generations, which, in some legal and social systems, are being removed from economic activity at an ever earlier age, are reflecting - sometimes with anguish - on the place and role assigned to them in this new type of society. How will they use the early retirement which is being imposed on them? Does modern society, as it evolves in new directions, still expect anything from its aged, retired members?

As they face this new and wide-ranging problem, society as a whole and, of course, its leaders must give serious thought to solutions likely to satisfy the aspirations of the aged. There can be no single solution. While it is normal for society to encourage the possibility of the elderly remaining within their families and their familiar settings wherever possible and desirable, other arrangements should be offered to senior citizens and the aged. In this area, a society which is truly conscious of its duties to the generations which have made their contribution to the history of the country must establish appropriate institutions. In order to provide continuity with what the elderly have known and experienced, it is extremely desirable for these institutions to be patterned on the family, affording, for example, to the elderly the human warmth which is so necessary at all stages of life but especially in old age, a degree of autonomy compatible with the requirements of community life, a range of activities in keeping with their physical capacities and occupational abilities, and all the care required by those of advancing age. Of course, institutions of this kind already exist, but many more are needed. In this connection, I wish to draw attention to the charitable work which the Church has done throughout the ages through its many institutions for the elderly. May such institutions be commended and encouraged: A society earns special distinction when it promotes as best it can, with due reverence for the elderly and in the various institutions dedicated to them, the convergence of these paths of service to man.

I think it would be useful to refer once again briefly to some of the new services which society can provide for retired persons and the aged to ensure them a place and role in the human community. I am thinking of the life-long training which exists in several countries and which not only is a source of personal enrichment for those who benefit from it but also equips them to adjust to and participate in the everyday life of society. Indeed, the elderly possess reserves of knowledge and experience which, if maintained and even supplemented by a well-suited process of life-long training, can be put to good use in various fields, ranging from education to simple social and philanthropic services. In that regard, some novel proposals might be explored with the elderly themselves or

the associations which represent them. I also think that society should make an effort, with due allowance for the individual capacities of the elderly and the very diverse situations in different continents, to create opportunities for a diversification of activities. Between a tedious uniformity and an unstructured existence it should be possible to strike a judicious balance between an occupation or other work, reading or even study, leisure, independent or organized contacts with other persons and other milieux, and time for quiet and prayerful meditation. One of the services which society can perform for the older generations is to encourage the establishment, where there are none, of associations for the aged and to support those which exist. Such associations have already produced results by helping those who reach retirement and old age to overcome loneliness and the painful feeling that they are no longer of any use. Such associations should be recognized by the leaders of society as the legitimate expression of the voice of the elderly and of the most underprivileged among them. Lastly, I am thinking of the role which the media, particularly television and radio, can and should play in projecting a fairer and more positive image of old age and of the potential contribution of the elderly to the vitality and stability of society. Towards that end, those who control the electronic media and the press must come to believe in or at least respect a concept of human life that is not based solely on economic and purely material utility but on the full meaning of life, which admits of admirable development and growth until the very end of each individual's stay on earth, especially when the environment is propitious.

In concluding these reflections and suggestions, it remains for me to express my hope that the Vienna World Assembly on Aging will yield abundant and lasting fruits. The topic of aging, like the many others dealt with and promoted by the United Nations Assembly, including children and the disabled, has a crucial bearing on the present and future of human civilization. The worth and influence of every culture, in whatever continent or country and at whatever period of history, depend solely on the pre-eminence it accords to the all-round development of the human person, from the first to the last stage in each one's earthly stay, by contrast with the temptation of a society caught up in a frenzied whirl of production and consumption of material goods. May the leaders of today's world work together for the genuine benefit of mankind and involve their peoples in that endeavour! That is the object not only of my most fervent wishes but also of my constant prayers before God, the source of all goodness.

2. Message from H.E. Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America

I appreciate the opportunity to extend greetings to delegates attending the United Nations World Assembly on Aging.

This Assembly represents a timely and farsighted effort on the part of the world community of nations to address one of the more remarkable phenomena of our times. Thanks to unprecedented advances in medicine, nutrition, and economic development, more people than ever before in history can enjoy the prospect of becoming senior members of society and of enjoying long and productive lives.

This development is most welcome, but it poses a number of social and economic questions with which we must deal. Older persons must have a secure place in society. They must be given the opportunity to contribute both socially and

economically. Above all, they must not be denied the dignity that comes from being wanted, needed, and respected.

The challenges of ensuring a productive place in society for our older citizens are already upon us, and these challenges are fast growing in magnitude. The task before the World Assembly on Aging is not simple, and it must be undertaken vigorously and with a sense of purpose. That task is to identify and define the many questions surrounding a rapidly aging world population and to point the way to the answers or solutions that will effectively meet future challenges and promote the highest values of human freedom and dignity.

The United States has strongly supported preparation for this World Assembly, and we will continue to work with the other member nations for the betterment of this important, growing part of our world population.

I send my very best wishes to you for success in the very essential work you are undertaking.

3. Message from H.E. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India

Progress in medicine has not actually lengthened the life span of human beings but it has made it possible for more of them to live out a fuller measure of their allotted years. In affluent societies one-unit families and greater mobility in their life styles have aggravated the generation gap. Old people are left very much on their own. Those who can afford it, are put in comfortable and often beautifully located homes. Yet they are separated from their dear ones and familiar surroundings. Even this is beyond the means of average citizens, and the facilities provided for their aged leave much to be desired.

In developing countries, the problem is not so serious. Old people are revered as elders and sheltered within the joint family. Being in touch with several generations, seeing their families grow up around them keeps up their interest in life and issues. But industrialisation and modernity are beginning to disturb the old pattern. Even here, the concern and care for the old, which was so much a part of our tradition, is weakening. Also in the poorer sections, when there is natural or other calamity, it is the old who suffer most.

In India we have just begun to make provisions for old age pensions and are encouraging voluntary agencies and others to build homes for the aged. Dedicated social workers are also looking after the incurables.

The pooling of experiences and ideas from different countries will be useful in helping us to tackle our own problem. I send my good wishes to the United Nations World Assembly on Aging and to the eminent personalities who are representing their countries.

4. Message from H.E. Mr. Henryk Jablonski, President of the Council of State of Poland

On behalf of the Polish people, the highest authorities of the Polish People's Republic, and on my own behalf, I express to you our great appreciation for the decision to take up an issue of such importance as that of the aged throughout the world.

The significance of the problems of the aged stems not only from the increase in the number of persons in that group and their particular needs, but also from the specific social situation of the aged in various regions of the world.

I wish to assure you that the problems of the aged in Poland are the focus of attention of the authorities and of the general public. The reason is not only our country's difficult economic situation. In Poland, the older generation has always enjoyed special respect, playing a role in handing down national traditions and enriching the younger generation by its experience. Our principal task, therefore, is not only to provide special protection for the aged against the consequences of the crisis, but also to ensure that they have a social status which, at a time of rapid social change and changing life-styles, would guarantee them universal respect and full participation in social and political life.

In Poland, many of the goals of the draft programme of action of the World Assembly on Aging have been achieved or are about to be achieved. There is no age discrimination problem in our country. The social security system is constantly being improved and covers the entire population. The National Committee for the Aged, convened early in 1982, oversees all such matters and includes in its ranks representatives of the highest authorities and of social organizations, as well as of various scientific disciplines.

The maintenance of world peace is of particular importance to the implementation of the programmes of the World Assembly and of our own country.

The maintenance of peace is a necessity, not only to guarantee the economic development of all countries in the world, and thereby ensure an adequate standard of living for the aged, but, first and foremost, to establish a feeling of total security, to meet one of the basic, inalienable demands of all mankind.

For this reason, we firmly condemn all the hostilities taking place in various parts of the world. For this reason too, in concert with the other socialist countries and all who desire the harmonious coexistence of all peoples, we shall take the necessary steps to maintain and strengthen peace. The world cannot live forever under the threat of a cataclysm posed by the limitless build-up of the nuclear weapons potential. Life in peace is the prerequisite for the solution of the major social problems of the modern world.

In wishing the Assembly fruitful discussions, I should like to assure you that the problems of the aged are and will continue to be the subject of special attention on the part of the authorities and of society in Poland.

Annex II

List of documents

A. Basic documentation

| <u>Symbol</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A/CONF.113/PRE-CONF/L.1 | Annotated list of questions [for pre-conference consultations] |
| A/CONF.113/1 | Provisional agenda |
| A/CONF.113/2 | Provisional rules of procedure |
| A/CONF.113/3 | Organizational and procedural matters |
| A/CONF.113/4 | Introductory document: demographic considerations. Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/5 | Introductory document: developmental issues. Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/6 | Aging populations: economic policy considerations. Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/7 | Migration and aging: Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/8 | Aging populations and rural development: Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| A/CONF.113/9 | Introductory document: humanitarian issues: Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/10 | Aging in the context of the family: Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/11 | Report of the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly on Aging on its second session |
| A/CONF.113/12 | Aging and social welfare: Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/13 | Housing, environment and aging: Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/14 | Social development and aging: Report of the Secretary General |

| <u>Symbol</u> | <u>Title</u> |
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| A/CONF.113/15 | Problems of employment and occupation for older workers: Report of the International Labour Organisation |
| A/CONF.113/16 | Transitions between professional life and retirement: Report of the International Labour Organisation |
| A/CONF.113/17 | Income maintenance and social protection of the older person: income security for the elderly: Report of the International Labour Organisation |
| A/CONF.113/18 and Corr.1 and 2 | Income maintenance and social protection of the older person: the role of social security: Report of the International Labour Organisation |
| A/CONF.113/19 | Health policy aspects of aging: Report of the World Health Organization |
| A/CONF.113/20 | Education and aging: Report of UNESCO |
| A/CONF.113/21 A/CONF.113/21/Add.1 | The older refugees: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| A/CONF.113/22 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging: Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/23 | Activities of United Nations system on aging: Report of the Secretary-General |
| A/CONF.113/24 | Report of the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly on Aging on its third session |
| A/CONF.113/25 | Human settlements and aging: Report of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements |
| A/CONF.113/26 | Regional plans of action on aging |
| A/CONF.113/27 | Letter dated 13 May 1982 from the Director in charge of co-ordination of multilateral social matters in the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Austria addressed to the Secretary-General of the World Assembly on Aging |
| A/CONF.113/28 | Adoption of the rules of procedure |

| <u>Symbol</u> | <u>Title</u> |
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| A/CONF.113/29 | Credentials of representatives to the World Assembly on Aging: Report of the Credentials Committee |
| A/CONF.113/30 | Report of the Main Committee |
| A/CONF.113/L.1 | Report of the Pre-Conference consultations held at the Hofburg Congress Centre, Vienna |
| A/CONF.113/L.1/Add.1 | _____: Addendum |
| A/CONF.113/L.2 | Draft report of the World Assembly on Aging: Table of contents |
| A/CONF.113/L.2/Add.1 | <u>Idem</u> : Chapter I. Historical background of the World Assembly on Aging |
| A/CONF.113/L.2/Add.2 | <u>Idem</u> : Chapter II. Attendance and organization of work |
| A/CONF.113/L.2/Add.3 | <u>Idem</u> : Chapter III. Summary of the general debate |
| A/CONF.113/L.3 | Aging People in Lebanon: draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen |
| A/CONF.113/L.4 | A Day for the Aging: draft resolution submitted by Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Malta, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal |
| A/CONF.113/L.5 | Practical training centres: draft resolution submitted by Jamaica and Malta |
| A/CONF.113/L.6 | Establishment of an International Clearing-House on Aging Policies: draft resolution submitted by Dominican Republic, France and Poland |
| A/CONF.113/L.7 | Support from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) for matters in the field of aging: draft resolution submitted by Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru |
| A/CONF.113/L.8 | Protection of the elderly consumers: draft resolution submitted by Senegal |

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| A/CONF.113/L.9 | International co-operation: draft resolution submitted by Chile and Tunisia |
| A/CONF.113/L.10 | United Nations Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging: draft resolution submitted by Chile, Guatemala, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Philippines, Tunisia, United States of America and Zaire |
| A/CONF.113/L.11 | Strengthening of the capacity of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs: draft resolution submitted by Chile, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malta, Philippines and Tunisia |
| A/CONF.113/L.12 | Netherlands: amendments to draft resolution contained in document A/CONF.113/L.8 |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.1 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging: Text agreed by the Advisory Committee at its third session (Annex to document A/CONF.113/24): United Kingdom: proposed amendments |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.2 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging: Report of the Secretary-General (Document A/CONF.113/22): Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic: proposed amendments |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.3 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging: Text agreed by the Advisory Committee at its third session (Annex to document A/CONF.113/24): United States of America: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.3/Rev.1 | <u>Idem</u> : United States of America, France, Federal Republic of Germany: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.4 | <u>Idem</u> : Cuba: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.5 | <u>Idem</u> : Note by the Secretariat |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.6 | <u>Idem</u> : German Democratic Republic: proposed amendments |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.7 | <u>Idem</u> : Holy See: proposed amendments |

| <u>Symbol</u> | <u>Title</u> |
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| A/CONF.113/MC/L.8 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging: Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/22): Cuba: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.9 | <u>Idem</u> : Tunisia: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.10 | <u>Idem</u> : Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: proposed amendments |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.11 | <u>Idem</u> : France: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.12 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging: Explanation of variations between A/CONF.113/22 and Annex of A/CONF.113/24: Note by the Secretariat |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.13 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging, Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.113/22): United Republic of Cameroon: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.14 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging, Report of the Secretary-General A/CONF.113/22): Tunisia: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.15 | <u>Idem</u> : France: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.16 | <u>Idem</u> : Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.17 | <u>Idem</u> : United States of America: proposed amendments |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.18 | <u>Idem</u> : Senegal: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.19 | <u>Idem</u> : Netherlands: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.20 | <u>Idem</u> : Consolidated text of amendments to document A/CONF.113/22 |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.20 and Add.1, Add.2, Add.2/Corr.1 and Add.3 | <u>Idem</u> : Consolidated text of amendments to document A/CONF.113/22 |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.21 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging: Text agreed by the Advisory Committee at its third session (Annex to document A/CONF.113/24): Consolidated text of amendments to document A/CONF.113/24 |

| <u>Symbol</u> | <u>Title</u> |
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| A/CONF.113/MC/L.22 | Draft International Plan of Action on Aging: Report of the Secretary-General (document A/CONF.113/22): Algeria: proposed amendment |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.23 | <u>Idem</u> : Amendment proposed by the United States |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.24 | <u>Idem</u> : Amendment proposed by Algeria |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.25 | <u>Idem</u> : Amendment proposed by China |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.26 | <u>Idem</u> : Amendment proposed by Malta |
| A/CONF.113/MC/L.27* | Draft report of the Main Committee |

Information documents

| <u>Symbol</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A/CONF.113/Misc.1 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2 | Provisional list of participants |
| A/CONF.113/INF.1 and Corr.1 and 2 | List of participants |

B. Background documents

1. National reports

| | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ALGERIA | EGYPT |
| ARGENTINA | FINLAND |
| AUSTRALIA | FRANCE |
| AUSTRIA | FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY |
| BAHRAIN | GREECE |
| BELGIUM | GUATEMALA |
| BULGARIA | HUNGARY |
| BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC | ICELAND |
| CANADA | INDIA |
| COSTA RICA | INDONESIA |
| CUBA | IRAQ |
| CYPRUS | IRELAND |
| CZECHOSLOVAKIA | ISRAEL |
| DENMARK | ITALY |

JAMAICA
JAPAN
JORDAN
KENYA
KUWAIT
LUXEMBOURG
MALAYSIA
MALDIVES
MALI
MALTA
MAURITIUS
SRI LANKA
SWEDEN

THAILAND
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
TURKEY
UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
URUGUAY
YUGOSLAVIA
REPUBLIC OF KOREA
REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO
LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES
SWITZERLAND

2. Papers submitted by non-governmental organizations

Symbol

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A/CONF.113/NGO/1 | International Association of Gerontology "Foundations of a Policy for the Aged in the Eighties and Beyond" |
| A/CONF.113/NGO/2 | International Federation on Aging Suggestions for Amendments to the Draft International Action Plan |
| A/CONF.113/NGO/3 | The Associated Country Women of the World: Statement to the World Assembly on Aging |
| A/CONF.113/NGO/4 | International Association of the Third Age Universities: Statement |
| A/CONF.113/NGO/5 | EURAG - European Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly Statement |
| A/CONF.113/NGO/6 | World Federation for Mental Health Statement |
| A/CONF.113/NGO/7 | World Leisure and Recreation Association Statement |
| A/CONF.113/NGO/8 | International Security Organization - Statement |
| A/CONF.113/NGO/9 | International Federation of Business & Professional Women - Statement |

Symbol

A/CONF.113/NGO/10

"Tree Planting by Aging and Youth" Statement
submitted by 23 NGO's:

Arab American University Graduates
Baha'i International Community
Baptist World Alliance
Global Education Associates
Gray Panthers
International Catholic Child Bureau
International Catholic Education Office
International Council of Jewish Women
International Council of Women
International Federation of Settlements
and Neighbourhood Centres
International Federation of University Women
International Humanist and Ethical Union
Jaycees International
Pan-Pacific and South East Asia Women's
Association
Quota International Inc.
Universal Esperanto Association
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl
Scouts
World Federation for Mental Health
World Jewish Congress
World Union of Catholic Women's
Organization
World Union for Progressive Judaism
World Woman's Christian Temperance Union
Zonta International

A/CONF.113/NGO/11

Korean Senior Citizen Association
Background document

A/CONF.113/NGO/12

International Federation for Home Economics
Statement

A/CONF.113/NGO/13

International Prevention of Road Accidents
Statement

A/CONF.113/NGO/14

La Fédération Internationale des Résistants
(FIR)
Les activités de la Fédération Internationale
des Résistants pour les personnes âgées et
les victims de la guerre

A/CONF.113/NGO/15

Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix Rouge
Informations sociales, Regards sur la
vieillesse

Symbol

A/CONF.113/NGO/16

Maharishi European Research University,
Switzerland
Maharishi University of Natural Law, England
Maharishi International University, USA
Maharishi Academy of Vedic Science, India
Maharishi's Technology of Consciousness
Transcendental Meditation offering fulfilment
to the United Nations World Assembly on Aging

A/CONF.113/NGO/17

Maharishi's Technology of Consciousness
Transcendental Meditation offering fulfilment
to the United Nations World Assembly on Aging
Maharishi European Research University,
Switzerland
Maharishi University of Natural Law, England
Maharishi International University, USA
Maharishi Academy of Vedic Science, India

A/CONF.113/NGO/18

International Federation of the Elderly's
Associations FIAPA: The Role of the
Elderly's Associations towards Aging

A/CONF.113/NGO/19

A World Charter on Aging - The Nine Essentials
Statement by Help the Aged

A/CONF.113/NGO/20

"A Renewable Resource: all the people
providing care for the dependent aging"
Elvirita Lewis Foundation

A/CONF.113/NGO/21

Suggestions concerning housing: amendments
to the Draft International Action Plan
submitted by the Society for the Care of Old
People

A/CONF.113/NGO/22

Statement by the Federation of Associations
of Former International Civil Servants

A/CONF.113/NGO/23

Statement by Rehabilitation International

A/CONF.113/NGO/24

"Life-long Education and Aging"
The Association for Continuing Higher
Education

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