

Denmark – 1988

Mr. Sjursen

UN Youth Delegate Programme

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31. **Mr. SJURSEN** (Denmark), taking the floor on agenda item 90 as representative of the youth organisations of his country, said that for more than 20 years Denmark had not missed an opportunity to involve young people in United Nations youth activities so that they could impart the pertinent information to their peers at home. The areas of importance to young people (housing, education, employment and social conditions) warrant attention by the United Nations and the specialised agencies concerned. Young people must have the chance to play a role at all levels of society. To that end, the democratic system must develop innovative methods of decision-making if new standards and social structures were to be created.

32. In recent years, a growing number of development projects had been initiated in Denmark with a view to improving the conditions of young people and involving them in decision-making. The youth of Denmark was looking forward to new initiatives in that field.

33. The ecology was of concern to all members of the society and it was only natural that young people were concerned about creating a better environment. One could see them mobilising to protect the natural environment and to stop pollution; there too youth organisations could quite usefully contribute to the dissemination of information. However, the solution to the problems of the environment could not be dissociated from the overall development of society. It was therefore necessary to rethink the planning of infrastructure and industrialisation and to take the ecology into account in all economic and political matters.

34. There should also be concern about AIDS, a disease which threatened all mankind, without omitting the ethical dimension. Efforts in that field should be based on the following principles: consent, anonymity, frank, direct and honest information, security and an absence of discrimination. The case of some African and Latin American countries especially threatened by that disease was of great concern.

35. Human rights, which were for young Danes an ideal for humanity, meant to them the right to a life in which they could influence their own adolescence and the society of which they were part. Unfortunately, human rights were constantly being violated throughout the world. Danish youth condemns those violations wherever they took place and could not accept that young people were being persecuted for wishing to

express their opinion or to create what they considered a better society. Racism and xenophobia directly threatened many young people. Refugees and immigrants risked being victims of discrimination.

36. In 1988, the Danish Youth Council had organised a campaign of friendship and tolerance between young Danes, refugees and immigrants under the motto "A stranger is a friend you haven't met". [*10*]

37. In that connection, Danish youth regretted that the condemnation by the United Nations of the abhorrent system of apartheid in South Africa had not led to the adoption against that country of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions which was a necessary step towards creating a democratic South Africa with equal rights for all, regardless of race. Danish youth were particularly worried about the ban on political activities, particularly of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) and the United Democratic Front, but above all the intensified persecution of, among other things, the leadership of SAYCO, whose activities showed how young Africans could help establish a country based on respect for human rights for all. They were deeply affected by the detention of hundreds of activists of that movement, by systematic imprisonment, particularly of Patrick Flusk, who had several times met with representatives of Danish youth, and by the imminent execution of four innocent members of SAYCO.

38. The United Nations working group entrusted with preparing the Convention on the Rights of the Child would meet in November to take up the second reading of the draft articles. Danish youth draw attention to the article dealing with recruitment into the armed forces and urgently requested that the provisions of those articles be reviewed so as to offer children and young people the best possible protection against involvement in hostilities. How could children who were not otherwise recognised as responsible citizens be sent to the battlefields. The Convention should in that connection specify a mandatory age limit of 18 years.

39. Danish youth regretted that the last draft Convention did not contain provisions reaffirming the rights of the unborn child. It was essential to safeguard against unethical experiments with the human embryo. There should be rules concerning the use of modern reproduction and genetic techniques, since human life began at the moment of conception. It was in that spirit that the Danish Parliament had decided to establish an ethics council entrusted with regulating biomedical experiments.

40. Fortunately, the international political climate was currently very positive, especially with respect to East-West relations. Efforts should not, however, cease and it was necessary to pursue negotiations with a view to achieving a more secure world. Danish youth hoped that the future session at Vienna of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe would lead to closer East-West co-operation, particularly among youth organisations. They believed that contacts should be based on the free movement between countries and hoped for increased youth movement across borders. The extension, for example, of the Interrail System to the Eastern European countries could facilitate youth contacts.

41. Aware of the importance of measures to be adopted in the years to come so that future generations could live in a world without injustice, without danger and without pollution, his delegation would work towards that goal.

