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at 3 p.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 64th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOBHY (Egypt)

later: Mrs. de REYES (Colombia)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/34/3 and Add.1 and 2 and Corr.1, Add.5, Add.12, Add.16-26, Add.28, Add.34, Add.35 and Add.39; A/34/289, 345, 357, 359 and Add.1, 385, 387 and Corr.1, 499, 535 and Add.1, 542, 583 and Add.1, 658 and Add.1, 697; A/C.3/34/5, A/C.3/34/10, A/C.3/34/11 and Add.1, A/C.3/34/12; A/C.3/34/L.34/Rev.1, L.40, L.55, L.56, L.58-L.64, L.69-L.72)

1. Mr. ABDUL-AZIZ (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.58 on assistance to student refugees from Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa and explained that, although only some African countries were listed in the document, the draft resolution was being submitted on behalf of all the countries of the continent.
2. The preamble to the draft resolution stressed the discriminatory education policies and repressive measures being applied by the Government of South Africa against black students in that country and also emphasized the difficulties caused to Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia in receiving the student refugees from South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the draft expressed concern over the adverse effects which the application of apartheid, particularly the bantustan policy, was having on settled communities living in South Africa and in areas bordering Lesotho and Swaziland.
3. One of the provisions of the operative part of the draft resolution was a request to the Secretary-General to make every effort to mobilize assistance to facilitate the resettlement of refugee families from the border areas of South Africa and to provide adequately for the well-being of the children concerned. He stressed that assistance in the area of education and health was an imperative necessity at a time when the international community was celebrating the International Year of the Child. Refugee children should be given special attention and it was important that they should receive adequate food, since in general they suffered from malnutrition.
4. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the members of the Committee to document A/C.3/34/L.71, setting forth the financial implications of the draft resolution which had just been submitted.
5. Mr. SHERIFIS (Cyprus) wished to reaffirm his delegation's total opposition to the contemptible doctrine of apartheid and to demand the abolition of the system of bantu education. His delegation also expressed its concern for the victims of the policy of apartheid and its solidarity with them and commended the neighbouring host countries - Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia - for having taken upon themselves the burden of providing assistance to student refugees. Lastly, his delegation urged the international community and the bodies comprising the United Nations system to provide as much assistance as possible to the programmes for student refugees and would vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.58 if it were put to the vote, although he hoped that the Committee would adopt it unanimously.

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6. Mr. MATELJAK (Yugoslavia) expressed appreciation of the efforts of international organizations, especially the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to assist student refugees from South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe and thanked the Governments of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia for their humanitarian endeavours. The flow of student refugees to those countries not only had not stopped but had increased. His delegation felt that the Governments of the host countries merited commendation from the international community for their efforts to provide refugees with educational services, housing and other social benefits. The efforts of those countries were even more praiseworthy in that, as developing countries, they themselves needed considerable external assistance. The international community should substantially increase its assistance in order to improve the situation of the South African student refugees and assist the Governments of the host countries in their efforts to provide the refugees with care and education. His delegation therefore not only supported draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.58 but also wished to join the sponsors, and hoped that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objections he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.58 without a vote.

8. Draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.58 was adopted without a vote.

9. Mr. EDIS (United Kingdom) said that the way in which Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia had taken upon themselves the burden of the South African student refugees was admirable and noted that, in addition, many students from South Africa were continuing their studies in the United Kingdom with the assistance of his Government. With regard to Rhodesia, his delegation hoped that the student refugees from Zimbabwe would soon be able to return to their homes as the result of a peaceful settlement in that country. His delegation hoped that the same would apply in due course to Namibia.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its consideration of all draft resolutions with financial implications and he thanked all those delegations which had worked tirelessly to enable the Committee to complete that aspect of its work before the deadline set by the General Assembly.

11. Miss OBAFEMI (Nigeria) noted that a seminar on the establishment of regional human rights commissions had been organized in Cairo in 1969 with the assistance of the United Nations programme of advisory services. The report of that seminar had been the first specific measure taken by the United Nations to encourage States to co-operate among themselves in the context of the Organization of African Unity to establish appropriate arrangements in the human rights area. Such arrangements now existed in Europe and Latin America and the countries of the League of Arab States, and the same could be done in other regions of the world.

12. She formally introduced draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.40 on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights. Morocco, Norway, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Upper Volta had joined the sponsors of the draft. She pointed out that the resolution referred to in the second line of the first preambular paragraph should be resolution 24 (XXXIV), not resolution 23 (XXXIV).

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(Miss Obafemi, Nigeria)

13. Draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.40 represented a contribution by the sponsors to efforts to achieve the goals of international peace and security through the promotion of human rights at the regional level. The draft did not seek to establish new institutions at the international level but urged States to consider local arrangements within their respective regions for the promotion and protection of human rights. Such arrangements would make it possible to study human rights questions with greater frankness in the regional framework without the climate of suspicion which generally characterized foreign intervention; such arrangements could be established following consultations and seminars in the light of experience gained at the national level.

14. It was to be hoped that the Governments and organizations concerned would devote due attention to the "Monrovia Proposals for the setting up of an African Commission on Human Rights" which were referred to in paragraph 1 of the draft resolution. Aware of the need for United Nations support in such matters, the sponsors requested the Secretary-General, in paragraph 3, to explore the possibility of holding a seminar as soon as possible for the purpose of discussing methods for the promotion and protection of human rights.

15. Mrs. SIBAL (India) stressed the importance of the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for her country, in view of the fact that India was the only licit supplier of opium in the world. In her country, cultivation of the opium poppy, production of opium and its export to other countries, as well as its sale within the country, were under the control of the Government. Cultivation of the opium poppy was only permitted in certain regions in which illicit use of opium could be controlled. That was why the quantity of Indian opium in international illicit traffic was minimal.

16. As a result of the enormous increase in production of morphine and codeine by countries using poppy straw, the international market for Indian opium was diminishing rapidly, which caused socio-economic problems for her country. In order to meet the growing demand and at the request of a number of countries, her country had considerably increased cultivation of the opium poppy, thus keeping opium prices stable at a time when they could have risen spectacularly. At the same time, countries that manufactured morphine from poppy straw for export had raised their production beyond world requirements, since they were not subject to the control system under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961. In those circumstances, the Single Convention was partial, ineffective and discriminatory, and it was therefore urgent that it should be amended appropriately.

17. Her delegation welcomed the fact that the Division of Narcotic Drugs had adopted at least two important resolutions that would strengthen the treaty system in that connexion. Among other things, the resolutions related to appropriate restrictions and controls with regard to the cultivation, manufacture and export of all raw materials and derived alkaloids, prohibition of poppy cultivation in countries other than those in which it was traditionally established and limitation of the extension of such cultivation to meeting legitimate world demand for opiates.

18. Mrs. de REYES (Colombia) took the Chair.

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19. Mr. MAKEKA (Lesotho), speaking on behalf of Botswana, Swaziland, Zambia and Lesotho, observed that seldom in the history of mankind had there been a philosophy that had been more widely condemned than that of apartheid, which was practised by the white minority in South Africa. Thousands of innocent Africans, particularly school-age children, had left their country to seek refuge in the neighbouring countries of southern Africa. In order to deal with the situation of those student refugees, in 1976 the General Assembly had adopted resolution 31/126, which had given rise to the Programme for South African Student Refugees.

20. In the case of Botswana, he stressed that the chief problem was the increase in the number of student refugees who arrived from Namibia and Zimbabwe. It was therefore urgent to implement Project 2 (Residential/transit centre), which was described in paragraph 18 of the report of the Secretary-General on the question (A/34/345). The Government of Botswana hoped that the international community would respond generously to the appeal made by Ambassador Farah regarding additional financing. It was also to be hoped that the secondary school building programme would be completed in good time in order to alleviate the problem of the secondary school system, whose capacity was insufficient to deal with the constant flow of student refugees from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

21. In Swaziland, events that had taken place at the border with South Africa had increased the flow of student refugees. South Africa was implementing its policy of bantustanization and was establishing pseudo-independent States along the border with Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho. The Government of Swaziland had had to cope with the flow of refugees, both students and entire families coming from neighbouring bantustans, who needed to be settled in the country. It was to be hoped that, with the co-operation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme and UNICEF, steps would be taken to assist the new refugees, the majority of whom were families with children.

22. The Government of Zambia had had to cope with the problems of South African student refugees alone until that country had been included in the Programme, pursuant to resolution 33/164. It must be noted that most of the student refugees that would be trained in other countries used Zambia as a place of transit, sometimes for several months, while awaiting placement in educational institutions of other countries, and it was necessary to meet their needs.

23. In Lesotho, student refugees were integrated into society; the need to have separate premises and to locate student refugees in camps where they would be an easy prey to those pursuing them was thus avoided. Many African parents sent their children to school in Lesotho, since they detested the inferior system of Bantu education imposed on Africans by white South Africans. The country's primary and secondary schools were therefore insufficient for that entire student population. The delegation of Lesotho urged the international community to heed the appeal for financing of the projects described in the annex to document A/34/345, which were aimed at extending the country's educational premises and expanding its educational services.

24. While coping with the problem of student refugees, the four Governments also had to meet their own development needs. International assistance must take into account both types of needs in planning and implementing projects for student refugees. It was to be hoped that the Programme, originally aimed at South African students, would be expanded to cover students from Namibia and Zimbabwe as well.

(Mr. Makeka, Lesotho)

25. It was necessary to tackle the fundamental causes of the problem of refugees in southern Africa, since the world could not tolerate the establishment of a permanent refugee community.

26. Mrs. DUNG (Viet Nam) said that, in spite of the fact that historically they formed the basis of the moral values of society, human rights continued to be treated with contempt. The victims of those violations were those most entitled to make their voices heard at the United Nations, whether they were the black peoples of southern Africa, the Arab peoples in the occupied territories, the Palestinians, the majority of the Chilean people, who were ill-treated by a dictatorial junta, or the hundreds of thousands of underprivileged persons all over the world.

27. However, it was most frequently those who were responsible for the suffering who arrogated to themselves the right to preach on human rights to their victims. For example, mention must be made of the case of a country that had just finished waging a war of aggression lasting over 20 years against her country and the case of another country that by using puppets had unleashed a war on her country's south-western and northern borders, in order to destabilize it.

28. Sooner or later, the Government of the above-mentioned country would have to answer before an international tribunal, in accordance with the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, for its guilt or complicity in the genocide of three million Kampuchians. In Kampuchea, every sign of civilization had been swept away, and that country had been turned into an experimental laboratory for the so-called "cultural revolution" and into a platform for aggression against neighbouring countries.

29. That same country, whose population was 300 times greater than that of Laos, was intimidating that small nation with threats of war and undermining its stability by stirring up its ethnic minorities. The aggressor country was illegally occupying northern border points belonging to her country and stationing well-equipped troops there, ready for an invasion that could take place at any moment.

30. While the international community was endeavouring to provide aid for the reconstruction of Kampuchea and its return to institutional normality, the aggressor country was persisting in supporting its protégés within the framework of its hegemonist policy in Indo-China.

31. United, the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea had been able to rebuff definitively the initial acts of aggression. Meanwhile, in the United Nations, an attempt was being made to reverse the roles totally: the authors of genocide were proclaiming themselves champions of human rights and representing their victims as a threat to the independence of neighbouring countries.

32. That confusion of roles was an obstacle to a new stage of relations of friendship and co-operation which Viet Nam had embarked on with those countries. The situation required a firm stand, which called for keeping to facts and not to words. The double standard regarding human rights and the rights of peoples, according to whether the peoples were large or small, must be rejected. The United Nations must not disappoint the oppressed peoples who were enduring the tragedy of seeing their human rights violated.

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33. Mr. FERNANDO (Sri Lanka) said that the report of the Economic and Social Council dealt with a broad range of questions, including those relating to human rights. In that context, the usefulness of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights had been considered in the United Nations for some 10 years, and recently a seminar of the type envisaged in General Assembly resolution 33/167 had been held in Monrovia.

34. His delegation believed that national institutions for the promotion of human rights could be a useful instrument for enabling the countries of a specific region to hold a dialogue and agree on arrangements that coincided with their aspirations and interests. The delegation of Nigeria had introduced draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.40, of which Sri Lanka was also a sponsor and in which, inter alia, an appeal was made to States to consider the means necessary for establishing such regional arrangements.

35. Sri Lanka had already taken measures for the establishment of a National Centre for Human Rights in Colombo. Furthermore, as a member of the ESCAP region, which lacked regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, it was offering its capital as the host city for a future seminar at which measures could be considered for formalizing such arrangements. Meanwhile, it was prepared to hold prior consultations in order to agree with the other States of the region on the scope and purposes of the seminar and any other details relating to it.

36. Mr. VOICU (Romania) said that the number of resolutions already adopted in relation to agenda item 12 showed the importance of the questions dealt with under that item. Among them, his delegation was particularly concerned about the right to education. That interest was shared by other delegations, which considered that that fundamental human right merited full consideration.

37. That was not a new idea in the United Nations, where the interdependence of education, health and productive employment had already been pointed out. In that regard, he recalled Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/16, which recognized the need to provide young people with the necessary conditions for the exercise of their right to education and vocational training and to working conditions suited to their age. During the consideration of that resolution in the Commission for Social Development, attention had been drawn to the importance of mobilizing efforts at all levels to improve the education of young people, so that they could participate actively in national development. In resolution 1979/32, the Economic and Social Council had submitted to the General Assembly its conclusions on the priority which States should give to the objectives related to development, including the promotion of ample educational opportunities. In Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/52, emphasis was placed on the urgent need to implement General Assembly resolution 33/135, and States were recommended to devote attention to the training of qualified national personnel to promote technical co-operation among developing countries. In that connexion, the Third Committee had recently approved draft resolution A/C.4/34/L.39, co-sponsored by his own delegation and relating to International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace.

38. Document E/CN.5/557, which was under consideration by the Committee, showed clearly that, despite the increase in the developing countries' public expenditures

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(Mr. Voicu, Romania)

for education, the benefits did not always reach the whole population. The Director-General of UNESCO had shown the urgent need to establish priorities for education when he had stated, at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the New International Development Strategy, that, in 1970, there had been some 569 million illiterate adults in the world and that, even if the illiteracy rate decreased by approximately 3.5 per cent during the decade, the total number of illiterate would be 626 million by 1980, i.e., 57 million more than in 1970. The phenomenon of illiteracy was disturbing, as was the phenomenon of discrimination in education on grounds of sex. Both problems were a consequence of the old international order, and attention to it was one of the priority tasks of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The democratization of education was one of the objectives set by UNESCO for the new international economic order.

39. The current international development strategy also required the education and training of specialists for economic and social development. The linking of productive employment with education, the participation of youth in economic and social development programmes and the elimination of abstract education by establishing a permanent relationship between education and research and production would make it possible to improve the economic and social situation of every country. Those were the conditions which his delegation considered necessary for the effective exercise of the right to education. Economic and social equality and the effective guarantee of the right to work and to education were basic imperatives of contemporary life.

40. The Constitution of Romania, in various provisions, laid down the right to education, stated that it was compulsory and free of charge at all levels and provided for a system of State scholarships. Any discrimination was prohibited. The right to receive education was exercised from the age of six and lasted practically throughout a person's whole life. The instruction received was perfected by various methods, including retraining. The right to instruction was accompanied by various economic and social guarantees which ensured the necessary conditions and materials.

41. He urged delegations to support draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.34/Rev.1, concerning the right to education.

42. Mr. MAKEKA (Lesotho) announced that his delegation was withdrawing from the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.34/Rev.1.

43. Mr. MUCORLOR (Liberia) said that his delegation could not continue to sponsor draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.34/Rev.1 unless certain amendments were made to the text.

44. Mr. VOICU (Romania) pointed out that the draft resolution referred to by the two preceding speakers had not yet been formally introduced in the Committee.

45. Mr. NORDENFELT (Sweden) introduced, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.62, entitled "Protection of the human rights of certain categories of persons under arrest or detention". In many countries, with widely differing forms of government, there were large numbers of persons who were detained by reason of their political opinions or conviction.

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(Mr. Nordenfelt, Sweden)

46. At the thirty-second session of the Assembly, the Committee had adopted a draft resolution referring to the situation of political prisoners. At the thirty-third session, a draft resolution had been unanimously adopted that related to a particularly important category of political prisoners, namely, those who had been detained as a result of their trade union activity. In view of the broad support which those resolutions had received, he hoped that a draft resolution such as the present one, which endeavoured to keep the attention of the United Nations focused on the subject, would be adopted. In draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.62, the provisions of the two resolutions of the preceding sessions were summarized. Its purpose was humanitarian, and it was intended to improve the situation of persons arrested or detained by reason of their political opinions or convictions or as a result of their trade union activity.

47. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution could be adopted by consensus.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.