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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Tenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND PART (PUBLIC)\* OF THE 243rd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva  
on Wednesday, 30 July 1980, at 12.35 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. MAVROMMATIS

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\* The summary record of the first part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CCPR/C/SR.243.

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The public meeting was called to order at 12.35 p.m.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 40 OF THE COVENANT  
(agenda item 3) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled the Committee's decision that the States parties which had not yet submitted reports due under article 40 of the Covenant should be named in the Committee's annual report, and that they should be urgently requested to submit those reports as soon as possible.
2. It was probable that longer reports would soon be submitted by the Governments of Peru, Kenya and Tanzania, but he very much doubted whether a longer report would be received from the Government of Mali. A report would be submitted at an early date by the Government of Jamaica. For the reasons previously explained, he doubted whether a report would be received from Uruguay, or, in view of the existing situation in the country, from Lebanon. He had no further information regarding the report of the Government of Rwanda.
3. Sir Vincent EVANS suggested that the Committee should take a provisional decision to consider at its next session two of the three initial reports awaiting consideration - those of Barbados, Venezuela and Italy - together with one supplementary report from either Denmark or Norway. The Secretariat might then contact the Governments concerned and arrange for their representatives to be present at the Committee's next session.
4. Mr. GRAEFRATH, supported by Mr. HANGA, said that it might be better for the Committee to consider only initial, as opposed to supplementary, reports at its next session since there were divergent views on the procedure to be followed in examining supplementary reports.
5. Mr. OPSAHL said that he thought the Committee should consider the supplementary reports of those countries which were willing to co-operate with it. No difficulties had been encountered at the current session in considering the supplementary report submitted by the Government of Hungary.
6. In reply to a question put by Mr. SADI, the CHAIRMAN said that, if the Committee so wished, reminders would be sent to those countries which were due to submit supplementary reports.
7. Sir Vincent EVANS agreed with Mr. Opsahl that the Committee should consider supplementary reports from those Governments willing to co-operate, particularly since it appeared likely that, unless at least one supplementary report was examined, the Committee would have only two reports before it at the following session.
8. Mr. PRADO VALLEJO pointed out that the Committee's next session would be shorter than usual. He therefore suggested that two initial reports and one supplementary report should be considered.

9. The CHAIRMAN suggested that three reports - those of Venezuela, Italy and Barbados - should be placed on the agenda for the Committee's next session and that, if the Government of Barbados was unable to send a representative, the supplementary report from Denmark should be considered instead. He further suggested that reminders should be sent to Governments whose reports had been due in 1978 or 1979.

10. It was so decided.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 2) (continued)

Establishment of a Working Group

11. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should establish a Working Group composed of Mr. Tomuschat, Mr. Prado Vallejo, Mr. Lallah, Mr. Hanga and Mr. Sadi to meet for one week before its next session, on the understanding that it might be necessary to nominate one or two additional members should the Committee decide to invite the Working Group to consider other matters in addition to communications.

12. It was so decided.

Representation of the Committee

13. The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Sadi would be attending the forthcoming Latin American Seminar on Human Rights in Quito in his capacity as Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, and Mr. Prado Vallejo would be attending the Seminar in a personal capacity. In order to avoid any financial implications, he suggested that Mr. Prado Vallejo, who would be there in any case, should be asked to represent the Committee at the Seminar.

14. It was so decided.

Publication of documentation of the Committee

15. Sir Vincent EVANS recalled the suggestion he had made at the previous session that the Committee's official records should be published annually in a convenient and permanent form in two volumes, one containing the summary records of open meetings of the Committee and the other containing the relevant Committee documents. Such publications would promote the effectiveness of the Committee's work and facilitate its continuing dialogue with Member States. It would, moreover, make the documentation readily available for study by Governments, non-governmental organizations and scholars.

16. The Department of Conference Services at Headquarters had agreed that the cost of publishing annually bound volumes of official records would not be great and had further stated that since the Human Rights Committee was a body created under a treaty it was entitled to request the publication of any documentation it desired. He therefore proposed that the Committee should request the publication of the volumes he had mentioned.

17. Moreover, the Committee had adopted some 150 decisions under the Optional Protocol during the past four years, and he suggested that consideration should also be given to the publication of some of those decisions. He had selected about 40 which he considered suitable for publication for the benefit of scholars, persons interested in human rights and possible future authors of communications. The 40 decisions fell into three categories. First, there were decisions regarding cases on which the Committee had adopted final views. Those could be published in their original form giving the names of the authors and of the States parties concerned. Secondly, there were decisions regarding communications which the Committee had considered to be inadmissible. For those, it would be difficult in most cases to eliminate the name of the State party; although it would probably not be harmful to publish the name of the author or the alleged victim, that could be concealed if necessary. Finally, there were a few decisions which did not fall into either of the categories he had just mentioned. Each such decision would have to be considered on its merits in order to decide whether or not the names of the individuals and the States parties concerned should be published. The proposed document would contain an edited version of the Committee's decisions, a foreword explaining its purpose and an index. The first step would be to invite the Secretariat to prepare a draft of the document, following consideration of which the Committee might decide that such a document should be published annually.

18. Mr. van BOVEN (representative of the Secretary-General) said that if the bound volume of official records was to be produced purely for the use of the Committee itself, that would involve the publication of only some 20 to 30 volumes annually and the cost would be negligible. If, however, it were to be made available on a larger scale, as Sir Vincent Evans had appeared to suggest, the financial implications would have to be considered.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.