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Chairman: Mr. G. F. DAVIDSON (Canada).

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters IV and V) (A/2430, E/2447, A/C.3/L.363/Rev.1, A/C.3/L.364 and Add.1, A/C.3/L.366, A/C.3/L.367, A/C.3/L.368) (*continued*)

[Item 12]*

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. P. CHENG (China) said that those who had followed the work of the Economic and Social Council and its commissions were somewhat concerned to note that they had achieved nothing definite in the past two years. All too often political considerations had become involved in the exercise of the Council's essentially humanitarian, cultural, economic and social functions. The Council's refusal at its sixteenth session to discuss the report of the Rapporteur on Freedom of Information (E/2426) and the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour (E/2431) had further diminished the already waning prestige of the United Nations, a fact which should be of particular concern to the Third Committee, responsible as it was for dealing with humanitarian, social and cultural questions. The Chinese delegation had participated in the Third Committee's work in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, which called upon Members "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples". It would comment on the relevant passages of the Economic and Social Council's report (A/2430) in the same spirit.

2. The questions dealt with in chapter IV, section V (Population), were plainly of very great interest to his country. China had the largest population of any country in the world and its population density in certain regions was unparalleled. For centuries it had been faced with the problem of a population which was too large in relation to the amount of food available, and as a result had evolved an economic and social system which was peculiar to it. His delegation was glad to learn that the Population Commission had decided to undertake further studies on the three lines of work already under way and, more particularly, on the interrelationship of demographic, economic and social factors. Generally speaking his delegation approved of paragraphs 764 to 766, dealing with international and internal migration. While it firmly believed that internal migration was primarily the concern of each

government, it nevertheless felt that samplings made by a United Nations organ in some countries would be of interest to others. It therefore supported the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.363/Rev.1). It was desirable that the world population conference should meet in 1954 as planned. It was to be hoped that the conference would at least make it possible to define the world's major population problems clearly and perhaps prepare practical recommendations for their alleviation.

3. In connexion with chapter V, section VI (Freedom of information), his delegation hoped that the United Nations would pursue the matter actively. That was why it had voted in favour of the proposal to appoint a rapporteur (resolution 442 C (XIV) of the Economic and Social Council) and, subsequently, for the appointment of Mr. López. After the measured statement Mr. López had made a few days before (504th meeting), it was more than ever convinced that it had been a good idea to appoint a rapporteur and that Mr. López was just the man needed. At the sixteenth session of the Economic and Social Council it had voted against the proposal to postpone consideration of the Rapporteur's report until the Council's seventeenth session. That, however, was not the appropriate moment for the Third Committee to examine the report since, under resolution 631 (VII), the General Assembly was to study it only after the Economic and Social Council had done so. The joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.364 and Add.1) therefore represented the most appropriate decision the Committee could take at that stage.

4. He wished in that connexion to congratulate the United States representative on his sincere statement (504th meeting), the sole purpose of which had been to defend human rights and to reconcile the divergent views expressed in the Committee. While regretting that the United States Government had decided not to sign the covenants for the time being, he welcomed the United States assurance that its own proposals were not designed to replace the draft covenants. In the Commission on Human Rights the Chinese delegation had already made some preliminary comments on the three proposals (E/2447, paras. 263, 269 and 271), of which it approved on the whole, and it hoped that at the next session of the General Assembly the Third Committee would be able to adopt a decision based on specific recommendations submitted by the Commission on Human Rights.

5. As regards chapter V, section I (Draft international covenants on human rights and measures of implementation), he paid a warm tribute to Mr. Azmi for the valuable work he had done as Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, and for the objective statement he had made at the opening of the discussion (503rd meeting). The Chinese Government, which had been represented on the Commission on Human Rights since its earliest days, had been guided by five major principles. First, it proposed to promote

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. Its second objective was to place human rights under the protection of the law. Thirdly, in order to achieve the first two objectives it considered it essential that due recognition should be given to the varying degrees in which human rights were respected in the different countries of the world at the current time and it therefore unfailingly supported the principle that the rights enumerated in the covenants should be granted gradually. Fourthly, it held that no country or group of countries should attempt to impose its will on another country, whether with the object of embarrassing it politically or with the object of forcing it to accept a proposal, even if made in perfectly good faith. It therefore considered that the articles of the covenant should have a least common denominator of universal application, which did not mean that the countries which were the most advanced in the matter of human rights should retrogress. Lastly, the Chinese delegation had repeatedly opposed all attempts to incorporate in the draft covenants articles which it believed did not come exactly within the scope of those instruments. A case in point was the article concerning the right of peoples to self-determination, the inclusion of which in a covenant on human rights might provide a State with a pretext for refusing to accede to or sign the covenant. That was why, at the seventh session of the General Assembly, the Chinese delegation had expressed the view that, along with the covenants on human rights, a third covenant on the right of peoples and nations to self-determination should be drafted.

6. From the articles drafted by the Commission on Human Rights at its ninth session he singled out one, the article concerning the right of petition, which in itself demonstrated how difficult it was to achieve a solution acceptable to all. As he had stated in the Commission itself, he believed that that article would be of vital importances for the advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Nevertheless, to authorize non-governmental organizations and private individuals to submit petitions to the Commission on Human Rights denouncing infringements of those rights was, to some extent, to create an international right. In that connexion he wondered whether the time was ripe to revise international law in such a way that the individual should become its subject, and no longer the object it had hitherto been; and, secondly, whether international law and the national laws currently in force made it possible to achieve the advancement and effective and universal safeguarding of human rights.

7. With regard to the first question, there were signs of a trend away from the traditional principles of international law. There were four examples in support of that contention: article 10 of the draft convention on the elimination of future statelessness and article 10 of the draft convention on the reduction of future statelessness, as reproduced in the report of the International Law Commission covering the work of its fifth session;¹ paragraphs 17 and 18 of the report of the 1953 Committee on International Criminal Jurisdiction (A/AC.65/L.13); article 25 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, and Fundamental Freedoms, which, having obtained the required number of ratifications, had come into force; and the practice which the Trusteeship Council and the Fourth Committee had followed for several years of hearing

the authors of petitions relating to the Trust Territories. The conclusion to be drawn was that the right of petition was gaining ground and that the individual was gradually becoming the subject of international law.

8. As regards the second question, all the evidence was that existing international law had unfortunately not prevented States from infringing human rights and withholding fundamental freedoms. The absence of any international machinery had enabled States to violate human rights without fear of sanctions. That was why forced labour, racial discrimination, persecution for religious and political reasons, and the denial of freedom of expression, of the right to a fair trial and of the right of the individual to elect his own representatives still existed in many countries, certain Member States among them. It was, however, universally recognized how difficult it would be to perfect a system which would reduce abuses to the problems before them and to solve them with a sufficient minimum when the new and more progressive concept of international law had finally been accepted. The nature of that system still remained to be determined. For his own part, he agreed with the Egyptian representative that the General Assembly, through the Third Committee, should give the Commission on Human Rights instructions on the article concerning the right to petition.

9. As regards the articles relating to reservations and the federal clause, with regard to which it was also desirable that the Committee should issue instructions to the Commission on Human Rights, the Chinese delegation believed that, with goodwill and a sincere desire for co-operation, solutions could be found.

10. He hoped that the Commission on Human Rights would complete the draft covenants at its next session and that, if it failed to remove some of the fundamental differences of opinion, the Third Committee would itself endeavour to give the final touches to the drafts at the next session of the General Assembly. He was confident that the United Nations would be able to lay firm foundations on which future generations could erect an edifice of which man would justly be proud and on which would be inscribed the words "Humanity above all".

11. Mrs. CALDWELL (Canada) drew attention to the constructive efforts of the United Nations in the social, humanitarian and cultural spheres, efforts which were above controversy. She also emphasized the effective work which was being carried out quietly and conscientiously by the commissions of the Economic and Social Council. The very unobtrusiveness with which those organs worked might cause their activities to be overlooked, whereas their achievements were the most tangible results the United Nations had obtained in those fields. Their reports enabled the Council and the General Assembly to deal with the problems before them and to solve them with a sufficient measure of clarity, precision and dispatch. Some of the commissions, however, had had initial difficulties to face, particularly the Commission on the Status of Women and the Social Commission. They had had some difficulty in drawing up a well-chosen programme of work and their first reports had provoked lively controversy. But the Social Commission, for example, had become a body which worked satisfactorily in an atmosphere of calm, which had its programme of work well in hand and which had achieved results that redounded greatly to the credit of the

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighth Session, Supplement No. 9.*

United Nations. The Canadian delegation, which had been a member of the Commission for seven years and was about to leave it temporarily, paid a tribute to the manner in which the Social Commission had matured and gained in prestige. It also wished to congratulate the Secretariat on the valuable assistance it had given the Commission under the distinguished direction of Miss Julia Henderson.

12. She wished to point out the important work accomplished in the past year with regard to the control of narcotic drugs. The successful outcome of the United Nations Opium Conference, at which forty-one States had been represented, marked an important step forward. That could be seen from the fact that thirty-four States had signed the Final Act² and that twenty States had subsequently signed the Protocol adopted during the Conference. The Canadian Government expected to define its position with regard to the ratification of the Protocol in the very near future. Also worthy of note were the new fields which the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had begun to explore in recent years by taking up the problems of addiction and of synthetic drugs. While the problem of addiction was plainly as old as mankind itself, it was only recently that governments had begun to give the possibilities of prevention and cure the sustained attention they deserved. It was heartening to note that the Commission had asked the Secretariat to give the question a relatively high priority.

13. Discoveries with regard to the manufacture and use of synthetic drugs raised a new and in many respects revolutionary problem. The countries which produced what might be called the "natural" narcotic drugs were relatively few in number and the system of international control over the production and distribution of narcotic drugs had hitherto been based on that fact. With the discovery of synthetic narcotic drugs, however, the number of potential producing countries had increased considerably. New methods of international rationing, allocation and control had to be devised and the existing system perhaps reviewed. The Canadian Government would continue to follow with interest the efforts made to achieve a single convention in place of the nine existing instruments, and to unify, rationalize and co-ordinate more effectively the work of such bodies as the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Permanent Central Opium Board and the Supervisory Body.

14. With regard to chapter V of the Council's report the Canadian delegation had on many occasions wished that both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council would show greater consideration for the position of the Commission on Human Rights and more patience and tolerance with regard to the progress of its work. Declarations of human rights for all mankind, and the covenants which gave them substance and reality, could not be drafted hastily or completed overnight. The Commission had to have the time and unhurried calm needed to finish in orderly fashion the task which it had begun in 1946 of formulating the Magna Charta for future generations. Yet in recent years both the General Assembly and the Council had appeared not to understand the Commission's difficulties and had overwhelmed it with advice and directives, with the result that it had been overloaded with work, its attention

had been distracted and it had been prevented from keeping control over its work programme and agenda, as other commissions had been able to do. Consequently, the Canadian delegation considered it better to avoid sending further directives to the Commission on Human Rights with respect to those sections of the covenants which had not yet been finally formulated.

15. She was grateful to the United States representative for the explanations she had given a few days previously, of the spirit in which the three United States proposals had been put forward, and of their scope. The proposals had been submitted to Member States and the specialized agencies with the request that comments be submitted by 1 October 1953. Although the Secretariat had received comments from four or five governments and one specialized agency, the Canadian Government and several others had not found it possible to study the proposals with full attention in view of the short period of time allowed. The Canadian Government considered that they deserved serious consideration and suggested that a further period of time be given to governments for commenting. The comments, together with the views expressed by representatives in the Third Committee, should then be transmitted to the Commission on Human Rights for careful study and for the preparation of recommendations for the later consideration of the General Assembly.

16. Her delegation considered that the question of freedom of information deserved careful consideration because of its implications in the private and governmental fields. The report prepared by Mr. López (E/2426) was a document of too great import to be acted upon without complete examination. The Canadian delegation, conscious of the importance of the question, wished to join with other delegations which had expressed the view that the question of freedom of information, and the Rapporteur's report, should be given priority at the seventeenth session of the Economic and Social Council and that the Council should formulate recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly at its ninth session.

17. She reserved the right to comment later, if necessary, on the specific draft resolutions before the Committee.

18. Miss JOHNSON (Denmark) expressed her delegation's view that the Economic and Social Council had done valuable work and had already obtained appreciable results, as stated in its report. Chapter V dealt with human rights; sections I and II referred to the draft international covenants and the development of the work of the United Nations in that matter. Denmark had always advocated the preparation of the draft covenants and hoped that the Commission on Human Rights would soon finish its work so that governments which wished to do so would be able before long to ratify the covenants. The United States had proposed a programme on which the Danish Government had transmitted its comments to the Secretary-General. Her Government gave general support to the three draft resolutions but doubted whether the consultative body which it was proposed to set up would be of any great value in the more developed countries. On the other hand, the proposal for the study of particular items appeared to be of considerable interest, as did the French amendment (E/CN.4/L.304/Rev.1) recommending a procedure already successfully used by the International Labour Office.

² See *United Nations Opium Conference, Protocol and Final Act signed at New York, 23 June 1953*, United Nations, 1953.

Denmark had also proposed that States not members of the Commission on Human Rights should be invited to send representatives when the Commission was studying their reports; that appeared to be only fair. The United States representative had stated that her delegation's proposals were quite independent of the draft covenants and constituted a new question before the Commission on Human Rights. The Danish delegation understood that the preparation of the draft covenants was to be completed before the Commission considered the United States draft resolutions; that method seemed to be the most fitting.

19. Section IV of chapter V concerned the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities. Her delegation wished to state that its recent abstention in the vote in the Third Committee and in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on a resolution on the question was due simply to the fact that it had considered the provisions inapplicable. The members of the German minority in Denmark had equal rights with other citizens and the Danish Government gave unconditional support to the protection of minorities.

20. Section XII of chapter V dealt with the status of women. In that connexion she was glad to be able to announce that Denmark had signed the Convention on the Political Rights of Women on 29 October 1953. The Economic and Social Council had first considered the nationality of married women; in that connexion it had had before it some interesting documents submitted by the International Council of Women and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (E/C.2/360 and E/CN.4/NGO/48). Denmark had recently amended its legislation on that subject and its current laws gave women almost complete equality. However, serious difficulties still remained in many countries and it was to be hoped that governments would submit their observations on the draft conventions without delay, in accordance with paragraph 858 of the Council's report. The International Federation of University Women had drawn attention (E/CN.6/NGO/13) to the disparity between the number of women and the number of men on the staff of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, particularly in the higher grades. Denmark favoured complete equality between the sexes; that principle was, in fact, expressly recognized by a Danish law which was having an increasing practical effect. Consequently her delegation fully supported the conclusions of paragraph 882 of the Council's report. The Council had considered other questions concerning the status of women; her delegation approved of and would support any effort to ensure complete equality between men and women.

21. She wished to draw particular attention to the recognition and enforcement abroad of maintenance obligations, a matter dealt with in paragraphs 685 and 686 of the Council's report. Her delegation, with others, intended to submit a draft resolution on the matter. The problem was important and extremely urgent. Many women and children were in a desperate position because those who were legally required to maintain them were residing in another country and there was no way of taking legal action. That applied to certain emigrants and also to soldiers in occupation forces. The problem had become particularly acute as a result of the upheavals caused by the Second World War and the need for a convention on the matter was becoming more pressing every day. The question went

back to 1925, when the International Union for Child Welfare had considered a first draft convention. Since that time the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law had carried out extensive research under the auspices of the League of Nations and so had the United Nations. In August 1952 a Committee of Experts appointed by the Secretary-General under Economic and Social Council resolution 390 H (XIII) had prepared two draft international agreements (E/AC.39/1) which had been submitted to the Council at its fifteenth session. The Council had referred them to its seventeenth session to give Member States time to study a problem considered to be particularly complex and difficult.³ That was the current situation. Although appropriate conventions had been in force for many years among the Scandinavian countries, Iceland and Finland, they did not apply to children abandoned by occupation troops and in Denmark at least there were many such cases. It was not for the Third Committee to deal with the essence of the problem. It could nevertheless be noted that a question which had been considered by international organizations since 1925, and which was of vital importance for so many women and children, should be settled as quickly as possible by the competent bodies. A passage from the summary record of a meeting of the Social Commission in 1951 (E/CN.5/SR.171) showed that the delegations of seventeen countries had recognized at that time that immediate measures should be taken to remedy the position of women and children left without means of support. Her Government hoped that the Economic and Social Council would finish its work on the problem as soon as possible and would submit appropriate draft resolutions to the General Assembly for final decision. The United Nations must spare no effort to help women and children who were suffering because international agreements which had been in preparation for twenty-eight years were not yet complete.

22. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) recalled that social problems and human rights were of exceptional importance, as the majority of the States Members of the United Nations recognized. However, United Nations activity in that matter was still very inadequate. Despite the express provisions of General Assembly resolution 421 (V), the drafting of the covenant on human rights had not yet been completed. That delay was due to the hostile attitude of certain governments. Each time the Economic and Social Council took up the question it decided, under some pretext or other, to postpone it to another session. The opponents of the covenant had succeeded in ensuring that the single text at first proposed should be replaced by two separate drafts. The division had no basis; civil and political rights were inseparable from economic, social and cultural rights and without them would remain a dead letter. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic agreed with several other Member States that it was necessary to go back to a single covenant.

23. The Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council had no right to assert that they had not had enough time. At its ninth session the Commission had devoted twenty meetings to the study of measures of implementation which would prejudice the principle of the sovereignty of States and permit interference in their domestic affairs. Such

³ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifteenth Session, 673rd meeting.*

measures were clearly incompatible with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. Human rights had to be safeguarded in every country by the constitution and the law; it was the responsibility of each government, and not of some international organ, to see that they were respected. Moreover, it seemed absurd to be concerned about measures of implementation when certain articles of the covenant still had to be drawn up. It was high time the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council turned their attention to their real task and completed the drafting of the covenant by adopting articles in harmony with the spirit and the letter of the Charter.

24. The Byelorussian SSR was against the insertion in the covenant of a provision, relating to federal States, which would have an unacceptable limitative character. Nor could it admit a right of petition which would cause interference in the domestic affairs of States. Finally, it was opposed to the United States proposals, which would only divert the Commission on Human Rights from its essential task and might prejudice the sovereignty of Member States.

25. At its seventh session the General Assembly had adopted resolution 637 (VII) on the right of peoples to self-determination. The decisions taken had not yet become operative because the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council had not finished the drafting of the covenant. The right to self-determination was one of the most sacred and inalienable of human rights, and respect for it would guarantee equality between nations and serve the cause of international peace and friendship. But the United States of America and other Powers, notwithstanding the principles enunciated in Articles 1, 55, 73 and 74 of the Charter, wished to keep the oppressed peoples under the imperialist yoke and opposed the completion of the covenant. It was clear that the opponents of the covenant had no respect for the Charter and were acting in a manner incompatible with its express provisions.

26. The covenant would help to improve the economic and social position of peoples which were not yet self-governing. It was well known that the armaments race and the aggressive policy pursued by capitalist governments, in particular those of the North Atlantic bloc, had aggravated poverty in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Millions of human beings were suffering from unemployment, hunger and lack of any social security; inadmissible racial discrimination was being practised. There were examples in Tunisia, Kenya and black Africa. It was the duty of the United Nations to adopt programmes designed to improve the lot of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to ensure that they should enjoy the medical services, social security, insurance, pensions, educational opportunities and other benefits to which they aspired. In particular, free and compulsory elementary education should be instituted everywhere. The United Nations, in working to realize the necessary improvements throughout the world, should adopt a single covenant recognizing equal rights for all, without distinction.

27. He reserved the right to speak later on the draft resolutions submitted.

28. Mr. BEAUFORT (Netherlands) pointed out that it would not be possible to arrive at generally acceptable and final solutions of the problems of freedom of information and human rights so long as the

existing world tensions continued. As the Egyptian representative had emphasized, that conclusion was disappointing but gave no occasion for despair. It was rather an occasion to reflect on the most important reasons and causes of that state of affairs and to see what could be realized in the circumstances. The outlook was not very encouraging for one of the principal activities of the United Nations, the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, and that was why so much criticism was being levelled at the Organization. Although the cold war and the political differences between the major Powers had many evil consequences, such phenomena were only secondary causes. The roots of the troubles were spiritual: there were irreconcilably opposed conceptions of freedom and authority, of the significance of life itself, of peace and justice and above all of the origin and destiny of the human person, his personal dignity and his inalienable rights.

29. There existed a doctrine of State-omnipotence, according to which the State was a reality higher than its members, society being the end and man the means. That doctrine inspired a régime under which no freedoms were respected, not even the freedom which should be sacrosanct—the freedom of worship and religion—and under which human rights were constantly trampled under foot. The adherents of that doctrine were supposed to work always and everywhere for the expansion of their spiritual and political empire. Under those conditions, the free world had the right and the duty to defend its physical and spiritual borders; hence rearmament, the collective defence systems, and the growing tension in the world. At the sixth session of the General Assembly he himself had put the question whether an agreement on human rights was possible between the advocates of the two fundamentally different conceptions. Although one and the other used the same words, the ideas lying behind the words were fundamentally different. That was why the United Nations was making no progress in its efforts to draft a covenant on human rights or a convention on freedom of information. In time of tension many governments thought it necessary to impose restrictions which in normal times would be superfluous, and the result might be that there would be a convention on limitation of freedom of information. Another cause of tension lay in the difference between different countries in social, economic and cultural levels. It seemed difficult to take measures that would apply equally everywhere when the conditions were so different and the political institutions were founded on basically different concepts. It would scarcely be wise to impose free and compulsory primary education when everybody knew that in some countries that obligation could not be fulfilled for many years.

30. It might therefore be wondered whether the United Nations was not aiming too high in trying to draw up an international covenant on human rights. Speaking in his personal capacity, and not on behalf of his Government, he suggested that the Third Committee might consider the possibility of covenants on a regional basis. The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, to which he had at first been opposed but the value of which he was now glad to recognize, offered a precedent worthy of consideration. Countries which were on the same social and economic level would more easily reach agreement, and then after a certain

period of experience, the draft international covenant might prove to be more acceptable.

31. However that might be, the Netherlands delegation was prepared to co-operate with all reasonable efforts to reach an agreement on human rights and freedom of information. The Netherlands was among the sponsors of the resolution concerning freedom of information (A/C.3/L.364 and Add.1) and looked forward to the discussion of the report on Freedom of Information (E/2426) at the seventeenth session of the Economic and Social Council. The Netherlands Government was studying the new United States proposals on human rights (E/2447, paras. 263, 269 and 271). He therefore could express only his personal hope that the competent organs would give thorough consideration to the proposals. Even if the United States did not intend to submit them as an alternative to the draft covenants, it seemed that, as the United States Government was not prepared to sign the covenants, the proposals were *de facto* an alternative. It was, however, to be hoped that the United States attitude on the matter was not permanent. The Saudi Arabian representative had remarked (506th meeting), when speaking on the third United States proposal, that the improvement of mass information media was no guarantee that such media would be used in a proper and responsible way; that was a question of morals. But that applied in every field; covenants and conventions served a purpose only when peoples and individuals were living up to high moral standards. As the United States representative had emphasized, the co-operation and willingness of Member States were essential in order to ensure the observance of human rights everywhere.

32. Mr. JOUBLANC RIVAS (Mexico), recalling the Committee's decision (502nd meeting) on the procedure for consideration of chapters IV and V of the Economic and Social Council's report, listed the various questions which the Committee, in application of that decision, would have to consider under the item that was currently being discussed. He intended to make a number of observations on all those questions, particularly the two problems of freedom of information and human rights, which, in view of their importance, had been dwelt upon by previous speakers.

33. The Mexican delegation's position remained unchanged with regard to the problem in general and particularly with regard to the three instruments on freedom of information, the Convention on the International Transmission of News, the Convention on the International Right of Correction and the draft convention on freedom of information. Mexico was convinced of the need to ensure freedom of information throughout the world and had participated actively in United Nations work to that end. Its interest in the problem was therefore obvious. It believed, however, that the two conventions already adopted and the draft convention on which a decision had not yet been taken formed a whole, the component parts of which could not be separated. For that reason it felt that to attempt to implement one or two of the instruments independently of the two others or of the third would be to adopt a procedure which would not lead to the desired results. It would therefore support any move to give the convention on freedom of information final form, so as ultimately to open the three instruments for signature as integral parts of a whole. In the meantime Mexico would participate in any in-

ternational and United Nations action which might be taken independently of the conventions to promote and effectively ensure freedom of information.

34. The Mexican delegation considered Mr. López's report (E/2426) a valuable contribution to the work that was being done throughout the world on freedom of information, and regretted that the Economic and Social Council had not considered it at its sixteenth session. It hoped that the report would be carefully studied at the Council's next session and that the Assembly would have before it at its ninth session whatever recommendations the Council might see fit to make on the basis of the recommendations in Mr. López's report, some of which were important.

35. Before concluding his remarks on the report he referred to the delay in the distribution of the Spanish text of the document, which was otherwise elegant and careful. He wished in general to call the attention of the language service to the need to exercise the fullest care in the Spanish translations of United Nations documents and to see to it that they were distributed in time.

36. With regard to human rights, it was unfortunate that the Council had decided at its sixteenth session not to consider the substance of the section of the report of the Commission on Human Rights dealing with the covenants that were being drafted. The Mexican delegation was aware of the difficulties which confronted the Council in the performance of its duties, but did not believe that they were insuperable and hoped that the Council would overcome them in the future—as it had done in the past—and thus avoid exposing itself to such criticisms as had been made during the debate. It particularly hoped that the Council would submit to the General Assembly at its next session the two draft covenants which the Commission on Human Rights was to complete at its tenth session, after receiving comments from governments, the specialized agencies and the non-governmental organizations.

37. The United States decision not to sign the covenants was all the more disappointing because, as the Saudi Arabian representative said, it was precisely the major Powers which, by setting an example, could encourage the other nations to accede to the various international instruments concluded under the guidance of the United Nations. However, taking into account the fact that the United States draft resolutions (E/2447, paras. 263, 269 and 271) had been submitted for the sole purpose of promoting the observance of human rights and were in any case not intended to replace the draft covenants, the Mexican delegation, without prejudice to the position Mexico might take with respect to the two covenants, felt that the measures the United States suggested should be given serious consideration. It was particularly interested in the third draft resolution, on technical assistance with a view to ensuring the observance of human rights. A technical assistance programme designed to improve mass information media and administrative and judicial procedures, and to bring about a broader participation of the peoples in civil and political affairs and the establishment of governmental and non-governmental organs for the protection of human rights would, in the final analysis, represent merely an extension of the technical assistance programme for the protection of the rights of women, which had already been adopted in principle.

38. The Mexican delegation did not agree with the argument that the Commission on Human Rights should not concentrate on a single problem, as suggested in the second United States draft resolution. It felt, on the contrary, that the Commission could not simultaneously consider every aspect of human rights and that it should take each aspect successively in order not to dissipate its efforts. Moreover, the United States draft resolution would not prevent the Commission from considering several problems simultaneously if it thought it possible and desirable to do so.

39. With regard to the United States proposal that Member States should be invited to submit reports on the progress achieved in the matter of human rights, he considered it better to provide for a report every two years. Preparation of an annual report might raise many practical difficulties for governments.

40. The Mexican delegation noted with satisfaction that the United States was prepared to agree not to have its draft resolutions voted upon at the current session. It suggested that the texts should be transmitted to the Commission on Human Rights which, after careful study, would submit its recommendations to the Council while the Council would submit its conclusions to the General Assembly at its ninth session. That procedure would have the advantage of enabling governments which had not yet done so to send in their comments. It might be desirable, in that connexion, that the Secretary-General should send them a reminder and extend the time-limit.

41. With regard to the other problems which the Committee should consider under item 12 of the agenda it was to be hoped that the results of the conference of experts in Latin America on various aspects of the problem of strengthening national programmes of family and child welfare in that area would be submitted to the General Assembly at its ninth session.

42. Mexico had actively and in large part successfully participated in the work of suppressing the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and of restricting their use to medical and scientific purposes. It hoped that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs would complete and submit in the near future the text of the draft single convention including, besides opium and its derivatives, such substances as the coca leaf, marihuana and even—at least the Mexican Government hoped so—synthetic narcotic drugs.

43. With regard to population problems he recalled the draft resolution on internal migration submitted

by a number of delegations at the seventh session of the Population Commission and embodied in resolution 471 D (XV) of the Economic and Social Council. Mexico fortunately did not experience upheavals arising from internal migration movements, all such movements being covered by the necessary control measures. However, it understood the difficulties which confronted other States in that connexion and felt that efforts already undertaken in that field should be continued. That was why it commended the draft resolution on internal migration (A/C.3/L.363/Rev.1) to the Committee's attention.

44. Finally, the Mexican delegation regretted that the Commission on Human Rights had not had time to consider its agenda item arising out of General Assembly resolution 637 C (VII) and Economic and Social Council resolution 472 (XV), concerning recommendations on the right of peoples and nations to self-determination. Mexico, which had relatively recently achieved political independence, was particularly interested in peoples which had not yet achieved self-government and felt that the Commission on Human Rights should implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 637 C (VII), granting that item the necessary priority at its next session. It should be admitted, on the other hand, that the inclusion of article 48 in the draft covenant on civil and political rights (E/2447, annex I B) was a step forward and to the credit of the Commission on Human Rights.

45. Mexico had ratified the ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration for Work of Equal Value for Men and Women Workers, which had entered into force on 23 May 1953.

46. The CHAIRMAN observed that only two representatives on the list of speakers were prepared to speak at the afternoon meeting. That being the case, he wondered whether the meeting might not be cancelled.

47. After an exchange of views, in which Mr. BARODY (Saudi Arabia), Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic), Mr. ORBAN (Belgium), Mr. MEADE (United Kingdom) and Mr. PAZH-WAK (Afghanistan) took part, Mrs. PINTO DE VIDAL (Uruguay) formally proposed that the afternoon meeting should be cancelled.

The proposal was adopted by 21 votes to 5, with 10 abstentions.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.