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Forty-first session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 August 1989, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. YIMER

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER AND THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (agenda item 7)
(continued)

THE ROLE AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

(E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/16; E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/17; E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/19;
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E/1988/15).

1. Mr. JOINET said that extreme poverty had become a problem for all countries, including the so-called rich nations. That situation resulted from a sequence of persistent factors which affected the potential of certain individuals to assume or reassume certain responsibilities and to recover the rights which they had thus lost. That state of affairs, which had long been disregarded had finally come to light not only as an assistance problem but also as a human rights issue. It was not enough for a State to do nothing that would stand in the way of its citizens freely exercising their rights; it must also provide them with the means of exercising those rights.

2. Moreover, one could not over emphasize the fact that all human rights were indivisible, and that economic, social and cultural rights did not solely concern the satisfaction of basic needs.

3. For that reason, he hoped that the Special Rapporteur would be encouraged to give the subject further consideration as had happened in France, thanks in particular to the work of Father Joseph Wnesinsky, the founder of the International ATD Fourth World Movement. He was willing to take part in any activities along those lines.

4. Mrs. KSENTINI said that Mr. Türk had been right to devote part of his preliminary report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/19) to some fundamental conceptual questions, in particular the possibility of adopting a unified and indeed conciliatory approach to all human rights, bearing particularly in mind the dichotomy long maintained between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other, as seen in the division of those rights into two separate covenants.

5. Mr. Türk studied three fundamental questions which arose in that regard, namely, that of establishing whether there was a real difference in nature between the different rights, whether there was a hierarchy between those two groups of rights, and finally the specific features which characterized the legally defined means of implementation of economic, social and cultural rights. The last question was bound up with the legal nature of those rights and the question of States' obligations in that area. Thought should also be given to methods of strengthening the currently inadequate machinery for protecting economic, social and cultural rights, by comparing them with the machinery for protecting other categories of rights, including regional machinery. Mr. Türk might usefully have focused on the principles set out in the Declaration on the Right to Development and examined the possibilities of strengthening that Declaration and even setting up a binding international instrument.

6. Greater attention should be paid to the concept of fundamental rights, which currently applied only to civil and political rights since the Covenant relating to those rights alone contained a non-derogation clause. There were, however, economic, social and cultural rights from which no derogation could be made, such as the rights to adequate food, health and education; those rights were however only afforded minimal protection in the context of humanitarian law, the obligation of States to refrain from certain acts, for example, that of bombing a hospital even in time of war. It should therefore be emphasized that those rights went beyond the framework of humanitarian law and had become fundamental and inalienable human rights.

7. The distinction between rights requiring immediate implementation and those which required progressive implementation, among which economic, social and cultural rights were generally included would also require further study since it was completely outmoded; some of those latter rights in fact required immediate implementation. In his future study, Mr. Türk should also identify the links which existed between the exercise of civil and political rights and the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and study the conceptual and practical consequences of that interdependence, in order to dispel any doubts on that subject, and to show that the fact of underlining those links did not mean justifying violations of civil and political rights but in effect implementing all human rights.

8. Bearing in mind that conciliatory approach, one would need to distinguish between the formal recognition of human rights and their practical realization; that would provide an opportunity to emphasize the hybrid character of all human rights. It would also be useful to emphasize the links which existed between the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and so-called collective rights of a political nature, such as the right of self-determination.

9. It was also important to bear in mind the obstacles to the recognition and realization of those rights. Mr. Türk had started thinking along those lines in studying the phenomenon of extreme poverty and some aspects of international co-operation in that regard. But one needed, however, to discuss underdevelopment generally and reducing economic, social and cultural rights should not be reduced to mere rights of survival. The analysis of poverty in itself therefore needed to be supplemented by an analysis of its underlying causes with particular reference to the features peculiar to each country, and the resources available to it, but independently of its right freely to choose its economic and political system. The realization or non-realization of human rights was not tied to a particular political régime or a particular development system.

10. The way in which Mr. Türk's preliminary report tackled the question of structural adjustment and the role of international co-operation in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and more particularly the activities of financial institutions, revealed the international and exogenous factors which inhibited the realization of those rights, such as the debt burden, the meagre flow of resources from North to South and the inadequacy of international assistance. It would be useful for Mr. Türk also to study the conceptual aspects of the obligation of co-operation set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, which concerned not only civil and political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights.

11. Mrs. MBONU said that the numerous cases of human rights violations that occurred in the developing countries underlined the link which existed between the enjoyment of human rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights and the level of economic development of a country. The fragile economic condition of the majority of those countries was the product of the current inequitable nature of economic relations between States, characterized, inter alia, by the following features: the low prices of primary or semi-processed products, coming mainly from developing countries, as opposed to the inflated prices of industrial goods from the developed countries; the protectionist policies of the developed countries and the control which those countries exercised, through their voting rights, over the major international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF; the considerable power of the transnational corporations of the developed countries; the concentration of scientific and technological development in the developed countries; and the decline in investment by developed countries in the developing countries.

12. Consequently, the developing countries which had three-quarters of the world population had only one fifth of the world's income and thus lived in absolute poverty without enjoying even the most basic rights, such as the right to food, health and education. Furthermore, the developing countries were struggling under the burden of external debt which they had accumulated over the years and with which they were no longer able to cope. The current international economic order was therefore the greatest violator of human rights in those countries.

13. The United Nations had adopted numerous resolutions and elaborated programmes of action, all of which stressed the need to establish a new and more equitable international economic order, without which the effective promotion of human rights was impossible. The basic concepts of that new economic order had been established as early as 1973 in the Economic Declaration and the Action Programme for Economic Co-operation adopted by the Fourth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries, held in Algiers, but those calls had evoked little or no response from the developed countries.

14. For that reason, the preliminary report prepared by Mr. Türk (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/19) deserved close study. It identified two priority issues which should be tackled at the national level, namely the problems of extreme poverty and of structural adjustment. It was indeed clear, as Mr. Türk had noted, that any discussion of the problems raised by the realization of economic, social and cultural rights must start with a discussion of the phenomenon of poverty, since it was the poor who were most frequently denied those rights. Mrs. Mbonu approved the approach adopted by Mr. Türk and particularly supported the suggestion that a detailed study should be undertaken on land rights and agrarian reform, in view of their importance for the eradication of poverty.

15. With regard to the structural adjustment, Mr. Türk observed that it could have positive effects on the alleviation of poverty, but that those effects would not be sustained unless there was growth. In his analysis, Mr. Türk showed that only a change in the current world power structure could bring about the kind of economic order necessary for a greater enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights in the developing countries. She therefore approved the suggestion that the Commission and Sub-Commission

should initiate constructive dialogue with the international financial institutions with a view to stimulating the integration of poverty-reduction objectives in structural adjustment programmes. She also thought that co-operation between the Commission, the Sub-Commission and specialized agencies should be strengthened with a view to enhancing the contribution of the latter to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

16. In conclusion, she stressed that the current international economic order was a global problem which could only be resolved through international co-operation. Mr. Türk's study was therefore of particular significance in the importance it gave to the question of enhancing international co-operation to mitigate the external forces inhibiting the realization of economic, social and cultural rights in the developing countries. Finally, she fully supported the suggestion that the realization of economic, social and cultural rights should be considered as a separate item of the Sub-Commission's agenda.

17. Mrs. BAUTISTA congratulated Mr. Türk on his thorough study of the problem of the impoverishment of nations, in which he reaffirmed the irrevocable interdependence of all human rights essential to self-development, human dignity and the improvement of the quality of life.

18. When one considered the world economic situation and the living conditions of the greater part of its population, it would be more appropriate, in her opinion, to speak of the growing international impoverishment of the principles of human rights. The unparalleled advances in science and technology in some countries had had disastrous consequences for other less developed countries, whose resources had been plundered and natural environment irreversibly destroyed. One could not consider the new impoverishment of the world's peoples and the growing problem of hunger and famine in many regions, or the human rights violations which resulted without considering the responsibilities borne by the rich nations in that regard.

19. By providing them with financial assistance, the rich nations had only increased the difficulties of the poor countries. The burden of debt repayment had had serious consequences on the political situation in some countries and on efforts to restore fundamental human rights, since those repayments took up a substantial portion of national income which should be used for improvements in social services. It would not be unreasonable for the enormous profits made by foreign financial institutions to revert to those who needed them most.

20. Unlike Mr. Türk, she believed that the Sub-Commission should address the question of the disastrous effects of the policies of foreign financing institutions and recommend modifications or an easing of those policies, to enable the Governments of indebted and impoverished nations to use the funds they have available to them to improve the lot of their population. There was a need for the richer countries and their financial institutions to review their policies and to promote an awareness of the needs and fundamental rights of peoples, in order to save the world from hunger and the spectre of conflict all over the world, engendered by an uprising of those who no longer had hope or help.

21. The Sub-Commission must reaffirm that the first duty of Governments was to their people, rather than to any foreign Government or to financial institutions; and that women and children should be the primary beneficiaries of efforts to promote new development and to eliminate poverty. The protection of the rights of minorities and of indigenous populations to preserve their culture and respect their ethnic origins must also be guaranteed.

22. Mrs. Bautista finally stressed that people had the right freely to choose their destiny and that that would only be possible when there was a genuine and widespread desire to end the production of arms and work for peace in order to promote the dignity of the human person.

23. Mrs. WARZAZI noted that the question of the pre-eminence claimed for certain human rights over others had long been a source of polemics, but that nowadays international developments had led many countries to review their position, and that a time would come when all would support the well-founded conclusions of the Special Rapporteur that a hierarchy of human rights was no longer justified.

24. It had long been known that the developing countries had to struggle against starvation, disease, extreme poverty and ignorance, but the recent discovery that millions of human beings lived below the threshold of poverty in the developed and rich countries had come as something of a surprise. It was therefore evident that the problem of the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights concerned all countries. It was therefore necessary to study the reasons behind such phenomena and to find solutions.

25. She believed that Mr. Treat was right to say that the developed countries must share their resources with less privileged nations. It was not just a moral obligation, but also a necessity as the affluent nations were small islands of prosperity in an ocean of poverty. For their own security, those countries must endeavour to stem the tides which might well engulf them if the appropriate steps were not taken.

26. Many of the calamities which the developing countries were suffering had been caused by the great Powers, particularly the former colonizers. The list of their misdeeds was very long, but one should not be harsh with some and turn a blind eye on the errors of others. For that reason, she endorsed the view that countries which received aid should make every effort to administer it properly. The Director-General of the FAO had drawn attention the previous year to the fact that many third world Governments bore part of the responsibility for the starvation and poverty in their countries, because of their poor management, widespread corruption and policies which were not in the interests of the population. That situation showed the need to increase the participation of all citizens, including women, young people and the handicapped, in the decisions which affected them.

27. Debt certainly represented the main obstacle confronting the developing nations. The trend currently observed among the major financial institutions should be encouraged, as swift and effective decisions were needed. The great majority of debtor countries had in fact long since repaid their debts and were currently only paying interest, the waiving of which would cause no loss to those who had already made a considerable profit on their loans.

28. She joined other speakers in supporting the idea of paying particular attention to extreme poverty. She was ready to support any decision in that regard, as she supported the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur.

29. Mr. DIACONU congratulated the Special Rapporteur on his excellent analysis (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/19) of a wide-ranging and complex subject. It was clear that the problems of poverty, unemployment, housing, health and illiteracy would loom ever larger in the years ahead. Whatever view one might hold on the link between the various categories of rights, it had to be acknowledged that there was an imbalance in the work of the Sub-Commission between economic, social and cultural rights, with which it had dealt to only a limited extent, and civil and political rights, to which it had hitherto devoted considerable attention. Since human rights were indivisible, it was now necessary to establish minimum standards in the area of economic and social rights.

30. He shared the Special Rapporteur's view that priority should be given to the question of extreme poverty. One should not, however, lose sight of the fact that that was a relative question, which depended on the situation in each country. It was important in that regard to discover the causes of extreme poverty, including those linked to problems of development and marginalization. Also, any study undertaken by the Sub-Commission should address the links which existed between extreme poverty and all other human rights. As the Special Rapporteur had stressed, the phenomenon of extreme poverty also affected the developed countries, but the resources available to their Governments for resolving the problem were considerably greater.

31. With regard to the question of structural adjustment, which the Special Rapporteur proposed to examine at a later date, and which was partly linked to the question of the developing countries' external debt, it was a fact that the solutions which had been pretty well imposed by the international financial and monetary organizations and the commercial banks had brought about a reduction in economic and social expenditure in the countries concerned. As had, however, been noted in the report presented to the Commission for Social Development (E/CN.5/1989/2), the adjustment policies decreed by the IMF and the World Bank had had disastrous economic effects, particularly in African countries, and had merely worsened existing imbalances and exacerbated poverty and destitution. The Sub-Commission should therefore recommend the adoption of solutions that did not affect the social order of the countries concerned.

32. With regard to the international problems connected with the realization of economic and social rights, the Sub-Commission should always stress the implementation of development policies by all countries, and the need to establish economic relations and co-operation conducive to development and to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

33. Although he supported the idea of giving priority to questions of extreme poverty and structural adjustment, he thought it appropriate at the same time to establish a long-term programme on economic, social and cultural rights and to study in detail such rights as, for example, the right to health and the right to housing.

34. Mr. DESPOUY, supporting the proposals contained in the excellent report submitted by Mr. Türk (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/19), which highlighted the interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights, very properly drew attention to the consequences which the policies of certain international financial institutions had had on those rights and underlined the importance of the question of extreme poverty and structural adjustment policies.

35. He thought that, given the very rapid development of human rights since the Second World War, as reflected in the number of instruments adopted during the 1970s, it was necessary, in establishing standards in that field, to proceed with caution in view of their applicability to legal systems which were sometimes very different.

36. He supported the approach taken by the Special Rapporteur to the factors that hampered the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, and primarily extreme poverty. Mr. Türk was right in particular to refer to the activities of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, and to the conclusions that organization had reached concerning the indivisibility of human rights and the fact that extreme poverty was a problem facing both developed and developing countries. As Mr. Türk pointed out, extreme poverty was a human rights problem, the indivisibility of which it demonstrated a contrario, since its victims did not have access to essential goods, could neither make their voices heard, participate in the life of their communities or exercise any rights, not because of any legal prohibition, but because it was impossible for them to do so in practice.

37. When one looked at the structural aspects of the negation of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, the required reading was the study by Mr. Khalifa. He had demonstrated that it was no accident that the country of apartheid was, paradoxically, the third world country which had enjoyed the greatest amount of direct and indirect investment after the Second World War, precisely because it practised one of the most abhorrent forms of modern slavery. Chile was another example of the same paradox. A study of that country showed that in its first six or seven years of rule the military Government had received more official financial assistance than Chile had ever received under a democratic Government. The link between structural factors and human rights was thus a question which deserved detailed study.

38. Mr. Despouy wholeheartedly approved paragraph 82 of Mr. Türk's study on the policy of the Monetary Fund, since, as was noted in the following paragraphs and particularly in paragraph 85, the adoption of the policies proposed by the Monetary Fund had had disastrous results. The Special Rapporteur should submit to the Sub-Commission at a later date a model agreement between the IMF and a third world country, to enable the Sub-Commission to have a better idea of the structural factors in developing countries stemming from the growing destitution, debt and impoverishment of those countries.

39. Mr. ALFONSO MARTINEZ said that the situation in the developing countries, as far as the realization of economic, social and cultural rights was concerned, had become increasingly disturbing, particularly since the early 1970s. Reports by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as other regional commissions, now talked of decline rather than growth when referring

to countries in the Southern Hemisphere. The foreign debt problem was strangling Latin American countries in particular and preventing them from acceding to new forms of democracy. That crushing debt was being paid for not only in dollars, but also in the renunciation of sovereignty, and the current state of financial markets made the problem seem even more insoluble. Over the last five years, the countries of Latin America had had to pay between \$30 and 40 billion in interest each year on a debt which could never be repaid, as everyone was perfectly aware.

40. The key element in Mr. Türk's methodology for drawing up his preliminary report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/19) was clearly stated in paragraph 26 of the report under consideration, where the Special Rapporteur stressed the fundamental concept of human dignity. In the first part of his report, which dealt with some fundamental conceptual questions, the Special Rapporteur had raised the question of whether human rights were interdependent. It might seem surprising that such a question should need to be put, 40 years after the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it was clear, for example, that the most fundamental of all human rights, the right to life, was linked, not only to the exercise of civil and political rights, but also to the possibility of being fed and receiving medical care, in other words, the exercise of economic, social and cultural rights.

41. Some intellectual circles, nevertheless, continued to give priority to civil and political rights rather than economic, social and cultural rights. In that connection, he pointed out that he had had the honour of participating in the elaboration of two of the most fundamental United Nations resolutions: the resolution equating zionism with racism, and the resolution on the equality between civil and political rights, on one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights, on the other. The Special Rapporteur had been very clear about that and had settled the issue at the conceptual level, although in paragraph 35 of his report he suggested that a more thorough analysis should be made of the question of any differences between the two categories of rights.

42. With regard to the second part of the report, which dealt with problems in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights at the national level, he said that he wondered whether the question of extreme poverty and the problem of structural adjustment, to which Mr. Türk referred, should be the priority issues in the final report. It seemed to him that reference should also be made to the question of internal structures of various societies vis-à-vis the production and distribution of wealth. He therefore invited the Special Rapporteur to explore that particularly sensitive issue in greater detail.

43. The third part of Mr. Türk's study, which dealt with international co-operation in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, contained some interesting ideas on the various duties conferred on States by the two International Covenants on Human Rights. It was perhaps because those duties needed to be formulated differently at the internal level that most States had not yet ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

44. Lastly, he endorse the Special Rapporteur's preliminary conclusions.

45. Mr. SHAO JIN observed that the idea of the indivisibility of civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights, contained in the Proclamation of Teheran and in the Declaration on the Right to Development, had been used by the Special Rapporteur as the guiding principle for his study. Moreover, the realization of economic, social and cultural rights implied action at all levels, national and international, and the Special Rapporteur suggested that the relevant information should be collated in the future. In view of the widely differing situations in each country, it seemed easier to carry out the task at the international rather than the national level, and the Special Rapporteur could perhaps take that into account.
46. The question of North-South relations was a major aspect of international economic relations. Since the 1980s, the gap between developing and industrialized countries had widened steadily and in many developing countries the economic situation was worsening. On their side, the industrialized countries were adopting an increasingly demanding attitude. A good deal of work therefore needed to be done in terms of the economy, in many developing countries, and it must be acknowledged that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had not always shown much sympathy to those countries.
47. Although the Sub-Commission was neither a financial institution nor a development aid agency, there was nothing to stop it from discussing those questions. The Sub-Commission could also try to help create conditions favourable to the establishment of a new international economic order and the realization of economic, social and cultural rights.
48. In conclusion, he said that he supported Mrs. Attah's proposal that the Sub-Commission should study the question of the new international economic order and the promotion of human rights on a yearly basis, in order to show that economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights should be given the same importance.
49. Mr. HATANO noted that, in his outstanding preliminary report, Mr. Türk referred to the concepts of GDP per capita and government expenditure per capita (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/19, p.18). While it was very convenient to use those indices in order to compare income and expenditure in various countries, the inconvenience of the system was that it gave the impression that two countries were on similar levels in terms of per capita income, although in reality the income might be distributed amongst the population in a completely different way. It would therefore be desirable for Mr. Türk to take into consideration the concept of distribution of wealth amongst the population. In that connection, he remarked that reliable investigations showed that some 80 per cent of Japanese people considered that they belonged to the middle class, which meant that the gap between the affluent and the poor was extremely narrow in his country.
50. The Special Rapporteur also referred to the right to housing included in article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It was interesting to note that, because it was so difficult to buy one's own house owing to the price of land in big cities, Japanese people tended to buy cars or electronic equipment by way of compensation. Mr. Türk might well bear in mind, therefore, that a serious shortage in one area might have very complex repercussions on other areas of daily life.

51. He therefore concluded that undue reliance should not be placed on figures and statistics in a study of economic development and human rights.

52. Mr. SUESCUN MONROY said that the question of a unified approach to human rights had been raised some time ago and was highly controversial. Although in theory it would appear that the idea of equality between civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights ought to be accepted, in practice some States gave priority to the former and others to the latter. However, the end of the twentieth century had seen an abundance of international instruments in that area and currently a radical change in the position of States was taking place. That evolution seemed to show that one could not exercise civil and political rights without exercising economic, social and cultural rights. As constitutional law and public law evolved, advances were also being made in other areas such as social rights. In that connection, however, he thought it would be best to make a distinction between theory and practice.

53. In the southern hemisphere, extreme poverty was obviously a blight which required in addition to mere identification, a set of emergency solutions. Extreme poverty could no longer co-exist with the opulence of the few. The Special Rapporteur had also been right to stress the crucial role of international co-operation in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, but what form should that co-operation take? International economic co-operation was currently in crisis, with the fundamental problems of indebtedness and the fall in the price of primary commodities. It therefore seemed vital to devise new forms of international co-operation so that the problem could be settled in the interests of all.

54. Mr. BHANDARE thought that the United Nations system had thus far tended to over-emphasize civil and political rights in comparison with economic, social and cultural rights. And yet, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all human rights were universal, inalienable and inviolable, in other words integrated, interdependent and indivisible. It was obvious that if a person did not enjoy the minimum amount of economic rights, it was impossible for him to exercise his civil and political rights.

55. Nevertheless, in order to guarantee that economic rights were realized, it was not necessary to restrict the exercise of civil and political rights. A satisfactory balance had to be found between those two categories of rights, bearing in mind the fact that economic interests dominated the contemporary world. The Special Rapporteur was therefore right to stress the idea of the convergence of the two categories and Mr. Eide had rightly recalled that a person in need was not a free person. It had to be recognized, however, that 20 per cent of countries in the world, i.e. the industrialized countries, lived off the remaining 80 per cent, i.e. the developing countries.

56. The policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund gave the impression that currently there was no genuine international co-operation and that the world had entered an era of international subjugation, with one part of the planet enslaved by the other. In line with that pattern, in his own country of India, modern technology was unfortunately replacing the small-scale traditional industries which, however, Indian communes and villages greatly needed. He said that those who truly wished to help

developing countries ought to encourage the existing systems in those countries and not impose conditions which only served to increase poverty and slow down progress. Despite the Sub-Commission's study of the issue, he felt increasingly discouraged by the ever-worsening economic imbalances which characterized the contemporary world.

57. Mrs. SEIGEL (International Council of Jewish Women) said that she spoke on behalf of her own organization and the following non-governmental organizations: the All India Women's Conference, the Bahá'í International Community, the Centre for Sociological, Penal and Penitentiary Research, the Co-ordinating Board of Jewish Organizations, the International Alliance of Women, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Federation of Human Rights, the International Federation Terre des Hommes, the International Federation of Women Lawyers, the International Movement ATD - Fourth World, the Movement for International Union among Races and Peoples, the Medical Women's International Association, the Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, the Soroptimist International, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Women's International Zionist Organization, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, the World Federation of Methodist Women, the World Jewish Congress, the World Peace Council, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, the World Union of Women's Catholic Organizations and Zonta International.

58. She drew the Sub-Commission's attention to the linkage between agenda item 7, the role and equal participation of women in development, and agenda item 15 (c), prevention of discrimination and protection of women. Women would only cease to be victims of discrimination when their role in the development process was fully recognized at all levels. Currently, however, the contribution made by women to the gross national product, of more than 80 per cent in third world countries and over 25 per cent elsewhere, was unrecognized.

59. It was encouraging to see that, in its resolution 33/5, the Commission on the Status of Women had invited the organizations of the United Nations system to collect existing information on women's participation in the informal and unpaid sectors of the economies of member countries. In that connection, she drew the Sub-Commission's attention to the 1989 State of World Population report which disclosed, *inter alia*, that the contribution made by women to a nation's wealth and well-being was overlooked and never appeared in development plans. The report recommended that all countries should provide economic statistics on women's work and that every step should be taken to increase the productivity of women and to lessen the double burden of work in the home and outside it. The report also stressed the need to change the attitudes of decision-makers in favour of equality of opportunity for women.

60. Those economic considerations aside, women's rights needed to be promoted and protected; that task came within the mandate not only of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women but also of that of the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission which, it was to be hoped, would do its utmost in that regard.

61. Mrs. BEYELER von BURG (International Movement ATD - Fourth World) said her organization, founded in 1987 by Father Joseph Wresinski, had always sought not just to relieve but also to eradicate poverty which was at the root of the contempt and ostracism endured by the poorest people in all the countries of

the world, in order to free them from ignorance, dependence, violence and social ostracism. That was why the Movement had urged national and international bodies to recognize that poverty was a flagrant violation of human rights and a serious infringement of human dignity, and it was why, at its forty-fifth session, the Commission on Human Rights had decided to make the question of extreme poverty one of its priority concerns.

62. Five to 10 per cent of the populations of the industrialized countries were people who had no vocational training and were dependent on public assistance. There were 10 million such people in the European Community alone. In the rest of the world, the most destitute were so abandoned that even international action could not reach them, as the UNICEF Executive Board had itself recognized.

63. The bodies responsible for human rights issues and particularly the Commission, were in the best position to publicize all the forms of extreme poverty and emphasize the indivisible nature of all human rights, in order to progress towards a long-term comprehensive policy aimed at eradicating poverty, bearing in mind the tragic situation of the most helpless sectors of the population.

64. The International Movement ATD - Fourth World hoped that the Sub-Commission would keep in mind the wish expressed by the founder of the Movement for an alliance to be formed for the poorest of human beings in order to help the campaign for human rights.

65. Mr. ASSOUMA said that he hoped that the Sub-Commission would encourage Mr. Türk to continue his study and that it would decide to consider, in the future, the realization of economic, social and cultural rights as a separate agenda item.

66. He was personally very concerned about the problem of extreme poverty and fully shared the concerns of International Movement ATD - Fourth World. Poverty was an evil which had to be fought like any other blight that threatened peace - since the absence of war did not necessarily mean peace for people who were starving. Any person who was condemned to live in poverty suffered violations of his rights.

67. The international community should be aware of the phenomenon in order to combat it and, with that aim in mind, should recognize the mutual relationship which existed in the world between rich and poor.

68. Mr. TEITELBAUM (International Federation of Human Rights) said that his organization rejected the idea that full respect of civil and political rights, closely linked to respect of economic and social rights, was a luxury reserved for wealthy countries. There was also a "negative" interdependence of rights which could be observed when the economic and social policies decided and implemented by the ruling circles without regard for the interests, needs and wishes of the lower income groups, generated social tensions and reactions almost invariably resulting in repression. Consequently, the denial of economic, social and cultural rights of communities led, sooner or later, to violations of civil and political rights.

69. The adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund on a large number of countries had serious consequences not only on the economic, social and cultural rights of their populations but also, in the long term, on the economies of the targeted countries, which were no longer in a position to introduce the reforms needed to solve problems arising from extreme poverty.

70. As far as the debt problem was concerned, poor countries had been helping finance industrial reforms in wealthy countries for many years. The goal set by the United Nations that industrialized countries should assign 0.7 per cent of their GDP to the development of the developing countries had been achieved, but in a diametrically opposed way, since in recent years the net capital flow from Latin American countries to wealthy countries had constituted 0.75 per cent of those countries' GDP. The political and economic leaders of the debtor countries often shared the responsibility and sometimes the advantages of that situation with the creditor countries. Illicit currency trading, flights of capital and the vast efforts made to satisfy the megalomania of certain leaders were often the root cause of the foreign debt which over burdened the poor countries.

71. When the GDP declined and the greater part of financial resources were used to service the debt, it was the State's duty to apply a policy of fair distribution which should, first and foremost, meet the urgent needs of the most vulnerable groups. However, the actions of some States, international bodies and transnational corporations or banks had produced a situation where the available resources in some countries had dwindled to such an extent that they were no longer sufficient to guarantee respect for economic, social and cultural rights in a manner compatible with human dignity.

72. The Federation thought that the competent mechanisms for considering violations of civil and political rights should also consider violations of economic, social and cultural rights. The study of practical strategies for the realization of those rights was a large-scale task and Mr. Türk was right to propose that exchanges should be carried out with various specialized agencies. It was worth mentioning that the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development had carried out some significant studies in the area of development and had recently embarked on a programme concerning the social impacts of adjustment policies.

73. Mr. BARSH (Four Directions Council) said that the Sub-Commission had seen how difficult it was to treat both large and small States on an equal footing. In reality, the world mainly comprised weak States where power lay most often in the hands of competing social and political organizations which maintained and reinforced their power because the States themselves failed to meet some of the basic needs of the population. Thus, in the previous century, the rise of criminal organizations in the United States was linked to the miserable conditions of immigrants and the failure of State agencies to meet their needs. Therefore, by strengthening a State's ability to achieve social and economic rights for all sectors of society, confidence in the State was strengthened and the appearance of groups that would compete with the State for power was precluded.

74. Mr. Türk's report concentrated on the resources needed for development rather than on strategies to ensure development. Rigorous methods for measuring change and progress in the realization of economic, social and other rights were required to develop strategies. It was also vital that costly and

ineffective strategies should not be chosen. The assessment should be based on the mix of goods and rights to which a society actually aspired. The method of assessment should also address distributive questions, since national policies often had different effects on different groups or sectors of society. That was why the only method that would reveal sources of social conflict was one that examined change in the realization of rights according to racial or ethnic categories and economic groups or classes.

75. In order to give a more concrete dimension to the right to development, the Secretariat could offer technical assistance in the field of assessment of economic, social and cultural rights, within the programme of advisory services. Also, in order to bring human rights more into the mainstream of United Nations programmes and activities, human rights officers could be assigned to all branches of the Secretariat. The possibility of building an internal administrative network for human rights, as opposed to increasing the staffing and resources of the Centre, deserved serious study.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.