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Chairman: Mr. Erik NETTEL (Austria).

AGENDA ITEM 62

International Year for Human Rights (continued)
(A/7194, A/7195, A/7195/Add.1 and Add.3-6, A/CONF.32/41, A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1, A/C.3/L.1626 and Add.1, A/C.3/L.1633, A/C.3/L.1635, A/C.3/L.1636, A/C.3/L.1637):

- (a) Measures and activities undertaken in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights: report of the Secretary-General;
- (b) International Conference on Human Rights

GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF
DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.3/L.1623/REV.1
(continued)

1. Mr. DE SILVA (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said he was grateful for the opportunity of assuring the Third Committee of the constant support which UNESCO could and would give in implementing the decisions of the International Conference on Human Rights. There was no need for him to spell out the details of UNESCO action with respect to human rights. The Proclamation of Teheran and the resolutions adopted at the Conference constituted the best description and encouraged UNESCO to continue and intensify its activities in that field.

2. The work of UNESCO was threefold: international intellectual co-operation, assistance to development, and ethical action. Unless, however, the primacy of the ethical aspect were recognized, co-operation and development would be meaningless. The tragic problem confronting mankind was the incredible disparity between the real and the ideal, between principles and practice, and UNESCO believed that, twenty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Proclamation of Teheran shed new light and provided new guidelines for action to bring about the full realization of human rights. On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Declaration, the Director-General of UNESCO had said that it was not

a legacy from the remote past but a text prepared by men of the present generation which engaged the responsibility of all. Despite the majesty of its language, its words had not been chosen for their poetic sound, but as watchwords. For that reason, UNESCO—secretariat and governing bodies alike—had attached increasing importance to the part it could play in the matter of human rights.

3. In reply to a request for his comments on the preliminary work programme and budget of UNESCO for 1969-1970, the Secretary-General had written that to turn to efforts to secure recognition and respect for human rights, the United Nations would continue to look to UNESCO as an essential partner in the world-wide struggle for human dignity. UNESCO was ready to perform its role as a specialized agency of the United Nations. In that connexion, it was pertinent to mention that the General Conference at its fifteenth session had adopted resolution 8 in which it was stated that UNESCO was more than ever aware that the bastions of peace must be built in the minds of men. Thus, its role was to continue and strengthen its action in behalf of understanding and peace. It was for that reason that ethical considerations should be the motive force for its future programmes, both in conception and in practical application. Ethical considerations should also be the basis of its efforts towards the recognition and teaching of and respect for human rights and, in particular, the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

4. The representative of Iran had referred to the book entitled *Le droit d'être un homme*, which UNESCO had published in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That was the first book ever to present in so broad a universal perspective the words of those who in all corners of the earth had affirmed human rights. It vividly demonstrated that the aspiration towards human rights was not the invention of any single culture or region. All peoples and all mankind were equally involved.

5. UNESCO was prepared to do its part in implementing the historic decisions which would be taken in the Third Committee.

6. Mrs. ROQUET (Canada) said that, during the twenty years since the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Canadian Federal Government and most of the provincial governments had passed legislation to prevent all discrimination. Institutions to ensure that the law was respected in practice had also been created; three provinces had established Human Rights Commissions to determine the validity of all complaints, and to ensure that publicity was given to all human rights legislation. A good part of

the national budget had been devoted to improving social security and education, as the best means of ensuring full participation for all in social, economic and cultural life with complete enjoyment of civil and political liberties. In 1967, the provinces of Alberta and New Brunswick had each appointed an ombudsman to protect citizens from the possible abuse of administrative authority, and the precedent would no doubt be followed by other provincial governments in due course. Although the application of the Bill of Rights enacted in 1960 had been limited to federal jurisdiction, it had had considerable moral impact in convincing the public of the need for including a charter of human rights in the Canadian Constitution. Thus, a revision of laws and provisions had been undertaken in order to ensure the fuller understanding and wider implementation of human rights; the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism had performed significant work in that field, while a Royal Commission on the Status of Women was currently studying women's rights. Another Royal Commission was dealing with civil rights in the province of Ontario, while a committee charged with the responsibility of revising the civil code in Quebec had recently proposed inclusion of a declaration of civil rights in the revised version. The Canadian Government was aware of the problems of the Indian and Eskimo minorities, and in 1966 the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development had been formed to ensure the greater participation of those groups in the social and economic life of the country, while taking into account their unique contribution to Canadian cultural life.

7. In observance of the International Year, the Canadian Government had encouraged the formation of independent non-governmental associations to coordinate and promote activities, and a Canadian Commission for the International Year for Human Rights had been established with a government grant of \$100,000. The Commission had stimulated the organization of autonomous provincial committees, with the result that programmes during the International Year had been widespread and varied. Observance of the Year had been initiated with a national conference in December 1967, at which the then Prime Minister had made it clear that the equality which must be achieved in Canada required that a member of either of the two cultural or linguistic groups should be able to participate in all activities without having to renounce his own language and cultural background, and that realization of that goal would be a victory for the progress of all mankind, since for the world community also the only hope was unity in diversity. Following that conference, a number of schools had initiated human rights study projects, while several universities had conducted human rights lecture series or conferences and a large number of associations had organized meetings and seminars. Canada had acted as host to the Assembly for Human Rights, whose report had been a working document at the Teheran Conference. However, the most significant development in Canada in 1968 had been the Federal-Provincial Constitutional Conference, and in particular the proposal raised at it that a Bill of Rights should be incorporated into the Canadian Constitution. The then Minister of Justice had stated that such a bill would guarantee the fundamental freedom of the individual from interference

and, by establishing equal rights for all Canadians, would constitute a major step towards basic constitutional reform. At the beginning of December, a national conference would be held to examine the present status of human rights in Canada in the light of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with a view to giving impetus to the promotion of human rights in Canada in the future, since it must be realized that the promotion of human rights was a never-ending task.

8. It was deplorable that during a year commemorating human rights certain events had taken place. Developments in eastern Europe during August had been nothing more than the assertion of a proprietary right of a great Power to exercise domination over eastern Europe under the guise of a "fraternal" ideological relationship, in flagrant contradiction of a resolution adopted less than two years previously by the General Assembly concerning the principle, well known in international law, of non-interference in either the internal or external affairs of another country. That concerted action had been a flagrant violation of fundamental human rights and liberties. In the Middle East, the continuing tension and sporadic outbreaks of violence between Israel and its Arab neighbours were the seeds of future conflicts and could not but render more precarious the situation of the Palestinian refugees, already aggravated by the events of June 1967. Her Government realized, however, that any solution to the problem of those refugees could only be found within the context of a peaceful settlement between the Arab States and Israel. In the past twenty years, apart from the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East no real achievement which permitted the refugees to enjoy the dignity and security of a normal human existence could be registered. Canada also had a special interest in the problem facing the Jewish minorities in eastern Europe. Her Government was concerned about their lot and hoped that an end would be put to situations which it found contrary to those principles that were being promoted by the International Year for Human Rights.

9. Canada had taken an active part in the deliberations of the Teheran Conference; it had co-sponsored two resolutions adopted by it and had also submitted a resolution on legal assistance, requesting Governments to do all in their power to ensure that the right of appeal by an individual whose rights had been suspended was not negated by excessive costs or undue complexity of legal procedures. That resolution had been adopted unanimously. The deliberations of the International Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations on Human Rights, held in Paris in September 1968, had been carefully noted in Canada, and particular attention had been paid to the fact that too often respect for human rights gave way to the military, political or economic preoccupations of Governments. For that reason, her Government encouraged non-governmental bodies to continue their efforts in the fields of human rights and human dignity. With regard to ratification of international agreements, the Federal Government had consulted the provinces, as Canada's constitutional structure required it to do, in connexion with the International Covenants on Human Rights, and awaited an affirmative reply which

would permit it to become a party to them and to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Her Government also expected to ratify the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Agreement relating to Refugee Seamen before the end of the International Year, and was consulting the provincial governments concerning ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which it had already signed.

10. Her delegation did not believe that the total elimination of discrimination could be achieved by laws alone. Legislation could only stimulate the citizens to assume the final responsibility which they had in the matter, but nevertheless its limited powers should not be a cause for hesitation in the international community; for in the field of human rights the ultimate goal could be achieved only by long and unceasing effort.

11. Mr. GANESH (India) said that the Indian Government and people attached tremendous importance to the International Year for Human Rights and had attempted to observe it as fittingly as possible. Twenty years previously, when the Universal Declaration had been formally approved, the then President of the General Assembly had stated that the adoption of the Declaration was a "a step forward in a great evolutionary process" and that it was "the first occasion on which the organized community of nations had made a declaration of human rights and fundamental freedoms". Since that memorable date, the Declaration had been a source of inspiration for thirty-three important international instruments adopted by the United Nations and the specialized agencies and, as the Secretary-General had observed, no fewer than forty-three recently enacted constitutions had been influenced by the provisions of the Declaration, often reproducing its phraseology.

12. In the meantime, a whole new generation, which believed in the dignity of human beings as enshrined in the Declaration, had come of age. Consequently, it was only to be expected that the international community would pause for a moment to reflect on its achievements and on the distance it had still to cover in the achievement of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Moreover, less than one half of the current membership of the United Nations had participated in the work of drafting the Declaration, and it was high time that countries and peoples which had then been in colonial bondage should be given an opportunity to approach problems from the standpoint of the future. Thus, the necessary stimulus for the holding of the International Conference on Human Rights had already been present and, both in its work and in the Proclamation it had adopted, the Conference had carried the spirit of the Declaration a decisive step forward. It had reiterated the ideas contained in the Declaration and had introduced new concepts of human rights.

13. The Conference had not been held with the aim of achieving human rights overnight. It had, however, introduced one radical concept, namely, that human rights and economic rights were interdependent and interlinked. Human rights could not develop in isolation; they had to be continuously nourished by the

increasing realization of economic and social rights. The almost unanimous adoption of resolution XVII was particularly heartening because it displayed mankind's common concern in the efforts of the vast majority of the peoples of the world to assert their inherent economic and social rights. The twin concepts of human rights and the realization of economic rights would henceforth remain inseparably linked.

14. Another outstanding achievement of the Conference had been the recognition of the legitimacy of the struggle of the patriotic liberation movements in southern Africa and the recognition of the right of captured freedom-fighters to be treated as prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention of 1949. That had been a spiritual culmination of the historic General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). It was only a matter of time before the peoples of southern Africa were able to reassert themselves fully.

15. The Conference had adopted resolutions VI and VII, which, while deploring the manifestations of racial discrimination in various countries of the world, called for a study to be made of such situations and affirmed that the privileges and facilities which were the attributes of nationality should be fully respected at all times. That was a most timely act in view of instances of such actions taking place in some countries. His delegation also welcomed the passage of various other resolutions concerning respect for the privacy of the individual, the problem of illiteracy in the world, the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF, disarmament and the importance of youth in the modern world. It particularly welcomed the adoption of resolution XXIII concerning human rights in armed conflicts.

16. Draft resolution A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1 was an attempt to put into effect the various recommendations and resolutions of the Teheran Conference. It had tried to take account of all the ideas which had emerged at the Conference. His delegation was happy to be a sponsor of that draft resolution, since it felt that the Conference had been a historic landmark in the achievement of human rights.

17. Both the central Government and the state governments in India had taken action to observe the International Year for Human Rights in a suitable manner—the United Nations symbol and literature on human rights had been widely distributed throughout the country, and special broadcasts had been made. Financial assistance had also been given for the holding of seminars. Large public meetings had been held on United Nations Day in several states, and others would be held on Human Rights Day. Debates, symposia, and so forth, based on the theme of human rights, had been organized by educational institutions. Special film shows on the United Nations had been arranged, and officials of state governments had made use of various public and social occasions to propagate the principles and ideals of the United Nations, with particular reference to human rights. The Ministry of Education had received encouraging responses from most of the universities and organizations which had been requested to observe the Year. Literature about the United Nations had been distributed in all languages, and there was a tremendous demand for

further copies. The library of the Indian National Commission for UNESCO had prepared a bibliography of literature on human rights, which was currently in the final stages of revision, and had distributed among educational institutions and organizations a number of copies of the January 1968 issue of the UNESCO Courier, devoted to the theme of human rights.

18. The President of India had addressed the nation on the eve of United Nations Day, which had been celebrated throughout India even more extensively than usual. India had been host to the Seminar on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Indian Federation of Women Lawyers, in conjunction with other women's associations, was to hold an international seminar on human rights at Bombay on 10 December 1968. The Indian Federation of United Nations Associations had been entrusted with the task of co-ordinating all activities of non-governmental organizations in connexion with the International Year. On 10 December 1968, the Speaker of the Lower House would refer to the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and printed copies of the Declaration would be placed on the desk of each Member of Parliament. India had already ratified a number of conventions on human rights, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination had been signed and the instrument of ratification prepared; it would be deposited before the end of the International Year. Ratification of the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women was under active consideration, as was the question of signing the remaining conventions on civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

19. Mrs. TAIROVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that her delegation had emphasized on numerous occasions that the activities of States, of the United Nations and of the other international organizations concerned in the International Year for Human Rights should not be reduced to a purely ceremonial celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but should aim at finding a solution to urgent problems involved in the safeguarding of fundamental human rights and freedoms. As the International Year drew to a close, it was clear from the Secretary-General's report on measures and activities undertaken by States and international organizations (A/7195, A/7195/Add.1 and Add.3-6) that it had stimulated considerable interest.

20. Within the framework of the United Nations, the most important measure undertaken during the Year had been the International Conference on Human Rights. The decisions of the Conference had made a considerable contribution to solving current problems of ensuring and extending human rights, by condemning such phenomena as racism, colonialism, imperialism, oppression and war. Those decisions would be significant to the future progress of United Nations activities, since they touched on all the basic directions of work in human rights. In essence, they outlined a broad programme of future activities, including the drawing up of a new programme for the elimination of racism and action in the fields of women's rights, economic and social rights and cultural rights. Decisions touching on other important

aspects of United Nations human rights activities, should be studied carefully by the competent United Nations organs with a view to developing practical measures to implement them. Her delegation attached particular importance to resolution II on measures to be taken against nazism, which did not confine itself to a simple condemnation of that doctrine but urged States to declare nazi organizations illegal, stating that the question should be kept under continuing review by the competent organs of the United Nations so that appropriate measures could be taken promptly as required. By that decision, the Conference had defined one of the important directions of future United Nations activities in the field of human rights. By adopting resolutions conforming to the programme laid down in General Assembly resolution 2081 (XX), the Conference had discharged its terms of reference, and it had also been able to discuss many important questions of international co-operation in the field of human rights and take effective decisions on them.

21. Another event within the framework of the International Year had been the holding of a Seminar on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as proposed at the twentieth session of the General Assembly by the Byelorussian SSR. The report of the Seminar was unfortunately not yet available;^{1/} her delegation hoped that it would be circulated before the Committee took up agenda item 57 relating to the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. Opposition to racism and apartheid must occupy a central position in the human rights activities of the United Nations until those evils were finally eliminated. In that connexion, resolution XXIV of the Teheran Conference urging the proclamation of an International Year for action to combat racism and racial discrimination deserved attention; such an undertaking would serve to concentrate the efforts of States, the United Nations and the other organizations concerned on the problem, and the unanimous adoption of the resolution showed that the time was ripe for such measures.

22. A further positive development during the International Year had been the increase in the number of signatures and ratifications of international conventions, although they had still been considerably fewer than might have been expected. The Soviet Union had been the first of the great Powers to sign the International Covenants on Human Rights.

23. The actual situation in the field of human rights throughout the world continued to give rise to concern. The President of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union had stated in his message to the Conference: "The peoples of the world are greatly concerned about the policy of imperialist aggression which is causing death and suffering to millions of people. In a certain number of countries, the principles and decisions of the United Nations concerning human rights are being flagrantly violated. Up to this day, the people of certain countries are still subjected to colonial slavery and are the victims of apartheid and racial discrimination. The rebirth of neo-nazism constitutes a growing danger. The reactionary forces are having recourse in large measure to poli-

^{1/} Subsequently circulated as document ST/TAO/HR.34.

tical terror as an arm of reprisal against the democratic organizations and large masses of the population." (see A/CONF.32/41, annex III). It was true indeed that the aggression of the United States in Viet-Nam constituted a serious affront to such inalienable human rights as the right to life, and it was well known who stood behind Israel, which in June 1967 had committed aggression against the Arab nations. United States imperialism was in the forefront of support to the racist régimes of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, which were perpetrating monstrous crimes against the indigenous peoples.

24. The Soviet Union recognized its responsibility for the fate of the world, the security of peoples and the establishment of co-operation among all nations. Its people were proud of its achievements in human rights, and not attempts to slander it would meet with success. In the Soviet Union there were genuine economic and political safeguards, ensuring the practical realization of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Extensive activities had been undertaken in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights; 21 March 1968 had been designated the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and meetings had been held in Moscow and elsewhere expressing the Soviet people's demand that efforts to combat apartheid, racism and neo-nazism should be intensified. A conference had been held in Moscow in April, and lecture courses had been given in various cities. Material had been prepared for publication by the Press, and television and radio programmes dealing with the International Year had been broadcast.

25. During the past twenty years, the United Nations had given considerable attention to the drafting of international standards for guaranteeing and protecting human rights. A number of international instruments had been adopted, and it was now time to give due attention to measures which would ensure their implementation in practice. Such implementation depended primarily, of course, on States themselves and on their readiness to assume obligations and take decisions. However, the United Nations could also play an important part by using its political and moral influence on States, and should give considerable more attention than in the past to activities aimed at ensuring and protecting economic and social rights, without which civil and political rights could not be enjoyed. The competent United Nations organs should give particular attention to the problem of ensuring the participation of the widest possible range of States in international agreements on human rights, and the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights should also be reviewed.

26. If those purposes were to be achieved, a number of shortcomings in United Nations activities must be removed. In the view of her delegation, it would be desirable to increase the responsibility of the General Assembly for questions of human rights and to avoid, wherever possible, the establishment of various kinds of small and increasingly unrepresentative ad hoc bodies dealing with human rights, which had proliferated during recent years and were patently used in the interest of the Western Powers, with the aim of preventing the participation in discussions on human rights of the socialist countries and countries which had recently achieved independence from colonialism.

In addition, the agenda of such bodies as the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women was overburdened; every effort should be made to remove items which recurred unnecessarily from year to year and to avoid duplication, in order that the Commissions might concentrate on more important problems. Her delegation was also concerned about the financing of United Nations activities in the field of human rights, and could not support any increase in expenditure on such activities unless it was accompanied by a corresponding increase in effectiveness. The provision of figures by the Secretariat would be useful, but her delegation did not believe that it was justifiable for considerable expenditure to be incurred, at the expense of all Member States, by bodies on which only about one quarter of the total membership was represented.

27. The special occasion of the International Year for Human Rights would be followed by many normal years of continuing activity, during which her delegation would continue to support the protection of rights and democratic freedoms and to oppose imperialist aggression, colonialism, racism and neo-nazism.

28. Mrs. BARISH (Costa Rica) said she was pleased to inform the Committee that her Government had just deposited its instrument of ratification of the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Since that was the first ratification, it had begun the process of bringing into force the international instruments prepared by the United Nations for the protection of human rights. Her Government had thus taken the most effective action to celebrate the International Year for Human Rights, as urged in General Assembly resolution 2217 A (XXI) and had demonstrated its intention of recognizing and guaranteeing the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration.

29. That action was symptomatic of her Government's keen interest in and concern with human rights, which was also indicated by its advocacy of the proposal that a post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should be created within the United Nations system.

30. At the 1620th meeting, the Director of the Division of Human Rights had delivered a full and well-documented statement on the International Conference on Human Rights. Although much had been achieved at the Conference, it was by no means certain that the goals of General Assembly resolution 2081 (XX) had been reached. It was very discouraging to note that, during the International Year for Human Rights, there had been flagrant violations of human rights in various parts of the world. However, that was a reason not so much for pessimism as for a redoubling of efforts within the United Nations and elsewhere, with increased dedication and imagination, to achieve success in establishing human rights. All forms of discrimination based on race, colour, sex, religion and national origin must be boldly combated, together with other evils such as genocide, slavery, oppression of minorities, armed conflicts and invasions, the growing economic and social imbalance in the world, and denial of the right of self-determination of peoples.

31. Her delegation had followed with interest the discussions in the Ad Hoc Study Group established under resolution 6 (XXIII) of the Commission on Human Rights to consider the proposal that regional human rights commissions should be set up within the United Nations system. In that connexion, its views largely coincided with those of the Jamaican delegation. Efforts to ensure the more effective implementation of human rights should be made at three levels—national, regional and international—and Costa Rica had joined Iran and the United States in sponsoring a draft resolution at the Teheran Conference setting out that viewpoint.

32. Draft resolution A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1 constituted a balanced judgement on the Conference and sought to ensure that the activities of the United Nations with respect to human rights would continue and be intensified. It was for that reason that Costa Rica had co-sponsored the draft resolution, operative paragraph 2 of which was particularly important, in that it emphasized the urgency of eliminating denials and violations of human rights that could never be anything but unjust and unacceptable.

33. Mr. SOBOLEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the Byelorussian SSR had supported the designation of 1968 as International Year for Human Rights and had carried out a number of measures and activities in connexion with the Year, which were described in detail in the Secretary-General's report (see A/7195/Add.3).

34. Fundamental human rights were reaffirmed in the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, and their practical implementation was guaranteed by the very nature of socialist society, which proclaimed the principle of the equality of all citizens, and abolished once for all national and racial discrimination and the exploitation of man by man.

35. The working people of the Byelorussian SSR took an active part in the administration of the State and in the management of economic and cultural structures, mainly through the Soviet of Working People's Deputies at both the national and local levels, and through a wide variety of other organizations, such as trade unions, co-operatives and voluntary associations. Those organizations played an important part in the social life of the country and in the development of socialist democracy.

36. The principle of the equality of women with men, which was affirmed in the Constitution, had been fully implemented in the Byelorussian SSR. Women participated in all spheres of activity and played an important role in the political, economic and social life of the country.

37. Constant attention was given to the dissemination of information concerning human rights, including information on the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. In addition, a meeting was held annually on the occasion of Human Rights Day, in which representatives of all sectors of society took part, to assess the achievements made over the past year to extend human rights and freedoms. Wide publicity was also given to such matters in the Press and on radio and television.

38. In connexion with the International Year for Human Rights, a course of lectures had been organized to explain the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other United Nations instruments. In the Byelorussian SSR, 21 March 1968 had been proclaimed International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and meetings had been held in various cities at which the people had voiced their firm resolve to intensify the struggle against the imperialist policies of colonialism, racism, apartheid and neo-nazism.

39. The Byelorussian SSR was a party to the major international instruments relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in 1968 alone it had ratified five ILO Conventions. On 19 March 1968, it had signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

40. The Byelorussian SSR had taken an active part in the International Conference on Human Rights, whose decisions it believed had made a positive contribution to the elimination of colonialism, racism, neo-nazism and the policy of apartheid. Many of the resolutions adopted by the Conference had a direct bearing on the work of the Third Committee. His delegation attached particular importance to resolution XXI, relating to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, of which the Byelorussian SSR had been a sponsor. That resolution dealt with a number of the main factors preventing the exercise of those rights, and rightly pointed out that the United Nations and the specialized agencies must accord such questions the importance they deserved. Other important resolutions adopted at the Conference included resolution II on measures to be taken against nazism and racial intolerance, resolution III on measures to achieve rapid and total elimination of all forms of racial discrimination in general and the policy of apartheid in particular, and resolution IX on measures to promote women's rights in the modern world including a unified long-term United Nations programme for the advancement of women. Although his delegation was gratified at the adoption of resolution IX, he pointed out that many of its provisions were no longer relevant to the Byelorussian SSR, which had for many years been implementing the principle of the equality of women with men.

41. On the whole, the International Conference on Human Rights had succeeded in a comparatively short period of time in accomplishing important work and had achieved some positive results.

42. In the twenty years which had elapsed since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights there had been a broad exchange of opinion and information on the subject of human rights, and a wealth of information had been amassed on the question of the definition and implementation of fundamental human rights and freedoms at both the international and national levels. Moreover, the United Nations had recently adopted a number of important international instruments which were aimed at the protection of human rights and the abolition of the evils of colonialism and racism. The Byelorussian SSR, for its part, had taken an active part in numerous United

Nations conferences and seminars on human rights, and had made a significant contribution to the implementation of human rights. It would continue to speak for human rights and for the freedom and independence of peoples, and resolutely to oppose any attempts to prevent the taking of decisions on such urgent questions as the struggle against apartheid and all forms of racism and neo-colonialism, as well as any attempts to revive the cold war. The United Nations should direct its efforts towards the practical implementation of the provisions set forth in its Charter and in other international instruments.

43. Miss HART (New Zealand) said she would endeavour to assess the achievements of the International Year for Human Rights in the light of what her delegation believed were its basic objectives, namely, to consider what the standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights meant in practice, what each country was prepared to do about them domestically and how the international community could best assist their efforts.

44. The Secretary-General's report (A/7195, A/7195/Add.1 and Add.3-6) provided a fairly comprehensive picture of the way in which Member States had translated the recommendations of the General Assembly into meaningful domestic programmes.

45. A number of replies testified to an impressive and sustained array of measures taken by Governments together with non-governmental organizations to focus attention not only on external problems, but on the meaning of the Universal Declaration for each citizen and the extent to which it was being implemented domestically. In that connexion, she paid a tribute to Jamaica, to which the international community owed the concept of the International Year and whose Government and people had demonstrated their readiness to give thorough and practical expression to the cause they were so ably promoting at the international level. It would be appropriate for the Committee to acknowledge the reports received from Member States, and to thank the Governments that had supplied them, in the form of a resolution.

46. With regard to the measures and activities undertaken in New Zealand in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights, she said that the International Year had been formally proclaimed by the Prime Minister, and a wide range of activities had been undertaken with the participation of members of the Government and of non-governmental organizations. The Government had undertaken a careful review of those human rights conventions to which New Zealand was not a party, with the result that it had ratified two further ones—the Convention on the Political Rights of Women and the ILO Convention concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour—and had also signed the International Covenants on Human Rights. The study of other instruments and, in particular, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, was continuing.

47. At the private level, non-governmental organizations had sponsored a wide variety of programmes devoted in whole or in part to human rights themes, with a view to stimulating the interest of all age groups in human rights and promoting a debate among members of the public and a dialogue between the Govern-

ment and the public. Apart from their impact on public opinion, such programmes had stimulated interest in United Nations activities as a whole. Her Government welcomed that development, and ventured to think that the stimulus given by the celebration of the International Year would long outlast the Year itself.

48. Achievements at the international level included the measures taken by the United Nations family and regional intergovernmental organizations, and the significant efforts made by international non-governmental organizations; in that connexion, she paid a tribute to the results achieved at the two important Conferences held at Montreal and in Paris. She suggested that acknowledgement should be made of the value of those activities when the Committee took note of the Secretary-General's report.

49. The main event for Governments had been the International Conference on Human Rights. Despite the tendency in a number of the resolutions of the Conference to reiterate past statements of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs, and despite the amount of time spent on certain current human rights problems to the exclusion of others, the Conference had broken new ground by, for example, adopting proposals relating to the rights of detained persons, human rights in armed conflicts, the human rights aspect of family planning, and a new programme for the elimination of racial discrimination. The unanimous adoption of the Proclamation of Teheran, which restated and reaffirmed most of the standards of the Universal Declaration, was a major achievement. Her Government had hoped that the Conference would, as its agenda provided, also come to grips with the question of the measures that the international community proposed to take in the future to encourage the universal and practical implementation of the agreed standards in the human rights field. Unfortunately, a good many practical proposals were to be found only in annex V to the Final Act of the Conference (A/CONF.32/41) and had scarcely been considered.

50. The draft resolution before the Committee (A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1) seemed to provide an appropriate basis for ensuring that the resolutions of the Conference would be followed up. She assumed that, pursuant to resolution XXVI of the Conference, the draft resolutions appearing in annex V to the Final Act would also be transmitted to the competent organs of the United Nations.

51. One might wonder, however, what significance could be attributed to the discussion of human rights and of their implementation when events of the past year had shown that, in many parts of the world, reality did not correspond to the aspirations of the international community and the peoples of the world. In cases of armed conflict, the individual became a statistic suspended in a limbo of military and political expediency, and the international community could do little but offer palliatives. The past year had seen a challenge to some of the most vital standards that the United Nations sought to sustain—in particular, that of self-determination. The representative of the Soviet Union had referred in her statement to a number of significant dates in the Soviet Union's calendar of human rights, but the date that the international community would remember was 21 August. What the world

had witnessed was nothing less than a blatant assertion, backed as it had had to be with overwhelming military force, that in some situations fundamental human rights no longer held good; they could be rewritten, distorted or simply discarded, according to the whim of a big Power. It was a tragedy that that violation had been perpetrated through fear of freedom—a tragedy which had since been compounded by the various wretched efforts at justification, including a recent attempt to find a scapegoat in a minority already subjected to hostile treatment in other parts of Eastern Europe. It might well be asked what meaning the unanimous adoption of the Proclamation of Teheran could have in that context.

52. Part of the answer lay in the fact that, however vigorous the suppression, a people would always find ways to reassert its faith in fundamental freedoms. An invaded people had demonstrated courageously and unequivocally that tanks could not destroy ideas. It was for the international community to justify that faith by continuing to reaffirm unequivocally the standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fact that the Declaration held good for all peoples everywhere.

53. Regardless of the setbacks, the international community must continue to search for ways not incompatible with national sovereignty and independence whereby the United Nations could oversee and participate in the implementation of fundamental human rights. For example, with the entry into force of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the United Nations would be trying a very bold experiment in implementation. New ground had also been broken by the Commission on Human Rights when it had begun to implement the powers recently given it to examine, and to make recommendations on, consistent violations of human rights wherever they might occur. The international community had made a good beginning by defining standards. The larger task of developing objective and impartial procedures of accountability remained. In the opinion of her delegation, except in rare cases the end-product of any examination of human rights in individual countries should not be a condemnation. Rather, the international community should seek from its enquiry the certain knowledge that with its assistance there was nothing more to enquire about. If it did proceed in that way there were grounds for hope that there would be a renewed pledge of good faith from all Member States, and a reinforcement of the standards set forth by the Assembly in 1948.

54. Mr. DENNIS (Liberia) said his delegation felt that the achievements of the International Conference on Human Rights had been remarkable. It was to be hoped that, in keeping with the Proclamation of Teheran, all members of the international community would regard it as their solemn obligation to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The criterion by which success in that field should be judged, however, was not documentation but practical implementation. It was disheartening and sometimes embarrassing to note the widespread violations of human rights and, in particular, the sources from which they came.

55. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was one of the most sacred and solemn instruments of all

times. In the International Year for Human Rights, people and Governments should resist the temptation to think of "rights" in relative rather than absolute terms. Too much insistence on one's own rights could lead to the violation of those of others. His Government deprecated violations of human rights wherever they occurred and accepted its share of the responsibility for promoting and implementing them. It hoped that the International Year would help to eradicate all violations and would put the spotlight on areas of the world where they were being denied. The world must be a safe place for every human being to live in. The worth and dignity of the individual must be recognized and respected. Every human being must have the opportunity to become what he was capable of becoming. The world had a purpose, which could only be fulfilled when man lived in freedom and enjoyed the rights embodied in his very creation. The disastrous consequences of violating natural and material laws were obvious; the consequences of violating moral and spiritual laws might be less immediately apparent, but they were even graver. Man, being more than merely an animal, was a responsible being subject to an Infinite Judge at the end of history.

56. On the subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms, it was easy to develop a double vision, to see the faults of others and overlook one's own. The International Year for Human Rights should be a year of serious introspection and self-examination. The primary concern of each individual and community should be to decide whether he or it had been guilty of denying the rights and obstructing the freedom of others and, if so, how matters could be rectified. It was a weak individual or a weak nation that was obliged to resort to force to achieve his or its goals. Love and fear could not coexist. Invectives, polemics and diatribes would make the International Year for Human Rights an exercise on paper rather than a happy experience of international brotherhood and friendship.

57. Many people of the world knew their rights but did not know how to pursue them; they must be taught. Many peoples of the world knew their rights, but were barred from pursuing them; they must be protected. Many people knew their rights and would die rather than renounce them; they must be helped. Some people did not know their rights; they must be educated. Every human being must know his rights and how to pursue them; that must be the goal.

58. Mrs. PICKER (United States of America), speaking in exercise of her right to reply, said that, as the representatives of Syria and Kuwait had pointed out, there were indeed violations of human rights in the Middle East; unfortunately, and in spite of the unanimous adoption of the Proclamation of Teheran, there were such violations in many other parts of the world also. However, in her statement at the preceding meeting she had not referred to human rights violations in the Middle East, as she had not wished to take up the Committee's time in reiterating the well-known position of the United States on the subject, which was based on the five points elaborated by President Johnson in June 1967. More specifically, its position with regard to refugees in the Middle East had been stated at the 616th meeting of the Special Political Committee held on 18 November 1968 in the debate on the report of the Commissioner-General of the

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Furthermore, the Third Committee had specifically decided not to include in the general debate discussions of draft resolutions other than the one contained in document A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1. A draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1626) on the subject of the Middle East was before the Committee, and her delegation would make its views on it known at the proper time.

59. The purpose of her statement at the preceding meeting had been to stress the particular importance which the United States attached to freedom of speech and freedom of the Press. In that connexion, she had highlighted what to her delegation was a shocking reversal by forcible outside interference of the growth of those freedoms in Czechoslovakia.

60. She could not understand the logic of the Soviet Union representative, who had said that the statement made by the United States delegation was purely political and had nothing to do with the International Year for Human Rights—in other words, the mention of violations of human rights in South Africa and in Czechoslovakia and of the problems and, indeed, violations in the United States itself had nothing to do with the International Year. What she had tried to do had been simply to bring about a keener appreciation of the evils which arose from the discrimination of man against man on the grounds of race, creed or colour, and that was surely one of the objectives of the International Year.

61. Despite the unanimous support given to the Proclamation of Teheran and its lofty ideals, the fundamental freedoms of race, religion and conscience were not yet a reality in all countries. In that connexion, her delegation deplored the continuation in the Soviet Union of interference with freedom of religion and the right to belief, and the evidence of anti-Semitic practices in certain other Eastern European countries, notably Poland. Her delegation would continue to protest against interference with the freedom of religion, whether directed against Christians, Moslems or Jews, and it could not condone discrimination against individuals because they were members of religious or ethnic groups. It was not easy to eradicate prejudice and discrimination, but on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, enlightened Governments should make a real effort to refrain, as a matter of policy, from discriminatory practices and from preventing the free exercise of the right of any group of people to maintain its own language, religion and

customs. Indeed, Governments should actively discourage such practices by any person within their territories. Only thus could fundamental human freedoms be fully realized and the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Proclamation of Teheran be attained.

62. Mr. TOMEH (Syria) thanked the United States representative for acknowledging the validity of his question. He had not put that question in a spirit of acrimony, for, when speaking of human rights, it was important to transcend narrow national problems and to recognize the universality of the question of human rights. However, each question should be judged on its own merits; there was a difference between a universal approach and over-generalization. For example, the United States representative, in replying to his question about Arab refugees in the Middle East, had also referred to violations elsewhere and had made no distinction between different cases of human rights violations in different parts of the world.

63. With regard to the United States representative's defence of the freedom of the Press, he noted that that freedom could be abused; for example, in an article published on 17 September 1968 in the magazine Look entitled "The Case of the Missing Arab Refugees", an attempt had been made to show that there were no longer any Arab refugees in the Middle East. The author had claimed to have been commissioned to write that article by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and by the Department of State of the United States—an assertion which had subsequently been denied. However, the damage had already been done by that misleading article. Moreover, a statement made by the Secretary-General at the 612th meeting of the Special Political Committee on 11 November 1968 in which, in an unprecedented move, he had made particular reference to the hopeless plight of the new generation of Arab refugees had received no publicity whatsoever. It might be wondered whether such incidents were accidental.

64. He was glad that it had been possible to circulate the note submitted by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to the Teheran Conference (A/C.3/L.1636), which in his opinion contained the best and most authoritative analysis of the refugee situation in the Middle East.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.