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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
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Forty-first session
Agenda item 4

STUDY ON TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AFFECTING THE
HEALTH OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Preliminary report by Mrs. Halima Embarek Warzazi,
Special Rapporteur

CONTENTS

Page

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. In view of the small number of replies by Governments to the Note by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 1988/34 adopted by the Sub-Commission on 1 September 1988, Mrs. Halima Embarek Warzazi held consultations with non-governmental organizations concerned for the purpose of considering means of bringing Governments to give due attention to the report of the Working Group on Traditional Practices affecting the health of women and children and the recommendations therein.

2. The consultations have led the Special Rapporteur to make the following recommendations:

(a) The mandate given by the Sub-Commission should be extended by two years to make it possible to obtain the information needed in order appropriately to strengthen the report requested by the Sub-Commission;

(b) Study visits should be envisaged to selected countries in certain regions where traditional practices affecting women and children are prevalent and whose Governments have not yet sent a reply. The purpose of these visits would be to prepare for the holding of international seminars organized by the Centre for Human Rights; these seminars would study the effect of traditional practices on human rights and ways of eradicating traditional practices that adversely affect families and the community and of encouraging practices that are beneficial. The visits would also have the purpose of demonstrating the importance of holding such international seminars, aimed at government officials and national and international NGOs, and of mobilizing the NGO community at the national and international levels in support of such seminars;

(c) Sources of financing for holding these seminars should be sought in the Centre for Human Rights and other United Nations agencies, particularly UNDP. The Centre for Human Rights should provide Mrs. Halima Embarek Warzazi with all possible support to enable her to fulfil the mandate entrusted to her;

(d) United Nations agencies, regional economic and social commissions of the United Nations and other interested bodies should be asked to provide any information they have collected on traditional practices and on measures taken to eradicate traditional practices affecting the health of women and children;

(e) There should be greater co-operation between the Centre for Human Rights and the Inter-African Committee and national NGOs, and with Governments and international NGOs, including their national branches, in order to ensure implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group on Traditional Practices affecting the health of women and children;

(f) The Sub-Commission should recommend to WHO to invite Mrs. Halima Embarek Warzazi to address the Ministers of Health at the next World Health Assembly, at Geneva, on the subject of traditional practices affecting the health of women and children.