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**RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND ALL
FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION**

**Written statement* submitted by the Transnational Radical Party,
a non-governmental organization in general consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 February 2004]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The Transnational Radical Party wishes to address a peculiar type of discrimination, the one that is reserved to hundreds if not thousands of languages and the people that speak them that are either spoken by minorities or indigenous groups or that suffer from the dominant position that other languages have been enjoying for socio-political reasons.

Besides physical ways of shattering a people, less bloody, but more sophisticated means are established worldwide in relation to legal or psycho-political contexts, such as forbidding - or not allowing - the “legal” use of the language of a given people, or somehow persuading them to abandon it.

Many international organisations, in not allowing the use of minority peoples and in adopting one or a handful of national or ethnic languages as the official languages of the organisation themselves contribute to such a phenomenon in an unintentional way. Such a discrimination needs to be addressed before it is too late for millions of people their cultures and fundamental freedoms.

Day after day, this worrying discrimination produces, on the one hand, an increasing marginalization of the languages and cultures of weak peoples who, in the best case scenario, will at last constitute only a geographical or racial entity and, on the other hand, there is an increase in competition among the languages of the strongest peoples leading - as it is already happening in several important nations - to the triumph of one of them through the denial of the freedom of learning other foreign languages. The TRP believes that we are facing a sort of “*Jus primae linguae*” situation, which is quite similar to what in the middle-age was called the “*Jus primae noctis*”.

Against this peculiar conflict, that one could call the “War of Languages”, international organisations charged with the promotion of international peace and security should immediately find a viable solution.

In the last years, UNESCO has warned that in the third Millennium, up to 90% of the languages spoken today will disappear. The Action Plan adopted by the 2003 UNESCO Experts meeting on Endangered Languages states that the main reasons for the disappearance is “the tendency to use a single language as the global world language”.

To find more appropriate means not to waste such a fundamental heritage of humanity, the last General Conference of UNESCO, adopted a resolution on “Multilingualism in cyberspace”, which approved the establishment “in cooperation with other international organizations [of] a collaborative online observatory on existing policies, regulations, technical recommendations, and best practices relating to multilingualism and multilingual resources and applications, including innovations in language computerization.”

The TRP believes that simply to “warn” and to “observe” such a discriminatory situations will not be enough or effective. unless adequate means to stop the extinction of languages and people and to guarantee a transnational “ecological” communication are found the whole exercise is destined to fail. Furthermore, the TRP believes that there is a big need for general

education and awareness raising in order to trigger a public as well as political debate on the different hypothesis that experts and advocates are working one to search for appropriate possible solutions.

To conclude, the TRP recommends the convening of a first international conference on languages, possibly within 2004. The TRP hopes that the United Nations will be able to find, once again, the original spirit of the League of Nations, and that the solutions elaborated in that context at the beginning of the 1920s will be followed and adequately sustained. The TRP will be happy to participate in such a process serving as an example as well as a forum for the beginning of such a debate. In fact, over the last year, the TRP has started promoting the use of the international language Esperanto as one of the languages for its internal communication and during its meetings.

The Transnational Radical Party is also particularly concerned of the ways in which lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people are discriminated in dozens of countries the world over.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in spirit of brotherhood". Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are to be considered human beings and should therefore not be discriminated against for their sexual choices and orientations. In this context, the TRP commends the many declarations issued by the UN Secretary-General in favor of non-discrimination for gender reasons.

The TRP salutes the initiative triggered by Brazil at the 59th session of the Commission, with the preparation of a resolution on "human rights and sexual orientation" (E/CN.4/2003/L.92). The document claims that sexual diversity is an integral part of universal human rights as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The TRP endorses what many gender rights organizations have been proposing, and in particular what the International Lesbian and Gay Association and would like to suggest that the notion of "gender identity" be included in the final version of the resolution and that the document be discussed at the 69th session of the Commission for its eventual and final adoption.

Recently, the UN Committee on Human Rights in the case known as Young vs. Australia for the first time recognized partnership rights for lesbians and gays in a historic decision. Other international bodies, like the European Parliament have called for the opening up of marriage and adoption rights for lesbians and gays. Debates are ongoing in Poland, Slovenia the US, across Latin America, in South Africa, the European Union and New Zealand. The TRP believes that the time is ripe to promote such a debate also within the United Nations system.

The TRP is particularly concerned by the fact that some countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran prescribe the death penalty for homosexuality under their interpretation of sharia law. The TRP believes in the principle that there cannot be a crime without a victim and therefore urges those countries that sanction homosexuality with death sentences to halt such a practice and actively participate in an open debate on the nature of the discrimination against lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people.
