



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. MAIR (Jamaica)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/32/SR.5
4 October 1977
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 74: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)

- (a) DECADE FOR ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/32/3, chap. III, sect. G, A/32/61, A/32/193, A/32/196; A/C.3/32/L.3; E/5920 and E/5921)
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AGENDA ITEM 75: WORLD CONFERENCE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (A/32/3, chap. III, sect. G, A/32/61, A/32/197, A/32/206; E/5922)

1. Mr. GAGLIARDI (Brazil) said that his country, which was faithful to the ideal of universality of the United Nations, was always pleased to welcome the admission of new Member States - currently Viet Nam and Djibouti. As a developing country aiming to live in peace and harmony, Brazil was aware that peace and harmony could not exist together with any sort of racial discrimination and it considered the equality of its citizens to be the corner-stone of its development. The Brazilian Constitution guaranteed that equality to all citizens, without distinction on grounds of sex, race, religion or other grounds; racial discrimination was punished as a major crime. Brazil was therefore very interested in the results of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and hoped that, by the end of that period, the racist practices which still existed in some parts of the world would have been erased.
2. At a plenary meeting of the current session of the General Assembly, the Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs had stressed the moral and political duty of the international community to create conditions which would accelerate the solution of the problems existing in southern Africa. Brazil, which had been one of the first nine countries to sign the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, in March 1966, would support any initiative designed to facilitate the work and ensure the success of the World Conference to be held in 1978. At the sixty-second session of the Economic and Social Council, the Brazilian delegation had voted for resolution 2056 (LXII) concerning the implementation of the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and it was prepared to support that resolution in the Third Committee.
3. Mr. SOYLEMEZ (Turkey) said that universal respect for human rights was essential in order to build a stable peace and an orderly international society. In that regard, a common consciousness should be developed in order to encourage respect for individual dignity and fundamental freedoms. In 1945, reaffirming its faith in the dignity of the human person, the international community had given the

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new world organization the responsibility of promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 continued to provide a solid foundation for the Organization's work in that field. Other international instruments had subsequently been adopted to combat racial discrimination.

4. However, despite the efforts of the international community, millions of people were still subjected to racial prejudice. The most virulent form of racial discrimination was undoubtedly apartheid, which on the threshold of the twenty-first century represented the vilest form of modern slavery. That policy, which rested on the exploitation of the African people and which had resulted in immense suffering, was a violation of elementary human rights and of the right to self-determination and had become a major source of tension and conflict in the world.

5. The International Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia and the World Conference for Action against Apartheid, held in Maputo and Lagos respectively and attended by representatives of the Turkish Government, had contributed further to the just struggle of the African peoples. The problems of southern Africa had preoccupied the United Nations for over 30 years, but the situation in that area had never been so critical and a peaceful solution had never been so urgent as at present. It was encouraging to note the successful mobilization against apartheid of the international community, which had been stunned by the brutality of that system and would never accept it or the establishment of bantustans such as Transkei. The Programme of Action against apartheid adopted by the General Assembly mentioned the role which Governments and international organizations could play in its implementation. The Lagos World Conference, for its part, had called upon Governments to take measures against the recruitment of mercenaries and to refrain from doing anything which might contribute to the military and nuclear build-up in South Africa, which constituted a serious danger to international peace.

6. Throughout its history, Turkey had opposed both the theory and the practice of racial discrimination and intolerance. The second chapter of the Turkish Constitution guaranteed all the fundamental rights enumerated in article 5 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The State, for its part, was required to eliminate all political, economic and social obstacles which restricted the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms by the individual, and the Constitutional Court was vested with unrestricted authority to supervise the implementation of legislation pertaining to human rights. Turkey had supported all United Nations instruments opposing apartheid, racial discrimination and colonialism and supporting the legitimate struggle of the liberation movements. It had always strictly complied with the Security Council resolutions imposing economic sanctions against the régime in Southern Rhodesia and was pursuing a similar policy towards South Africa, with which it had no diplomatic, consular, commercial or cultural ties.

7. If the measures taken so far by the international community to eradicate racism, racial discrimination and apartheid proved insufficient, it would be

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necessary to take other more concrete and more effective measures. The declarations of Maputo and Lagos contained useful elements to guide the future course of action in that regard. His delegation hoped that, culminating in the efforts to be made at the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, 1978 would mark the ultimate solution of the decolonization problems.

8. Mr. MERKEL (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his country, which had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, was happy to state that there was virtually no discrimination within its frontiers. Millions of refugees from the eastern part of Central Europe had been integrated into its society. More than 2 million migrant workers were participating in the social welfare system. Their social situation could be regarded as satisfactory having regard to international standards. In some cases children of migrant workers attended special schools where they followed courses in their mother tongue and the curricula were different from those in the German schools. That was not discrimination but a means of giving such children equal opportunities in professional life, whether in the Federal Republic of Germany or in their country of origin. Moreover, the legal system in the Federal Republic of Germany provided for remedies against any attempt at discrimination, as illustrated by several court decisions mentioned in his country's most recent report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

9. Wherever people of different race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin lived together, exclusions, distinctions, restrictions or preferences could occur. Even where those distinctions existed solely for administrative reasons, it was important to make sure that they did not give rise to any real discrimination in practice. The first requirement was to educate the peoples of the entire world not to act in a discriminatory manner. It was therefore important that questions arising out of the coexistence of people of different race, colour, descent or ethnic origin should be discussed in public and that the United Nations, especially the Third Committee, should discuss them every year on a priority basis and give them the widest possible publicity.

10. Very few countries made racial discrimination their official policy. All members of the Committee agreed that the horrifying system of apartheid practised in South Africa should be abolished as soon as possible. It remained to agree on the means of attaining that end. His Government believed that if human dignity was to be upheld, it was essential to begin by trying all peaceful means. It took every opportunity to urge the Government of South Africa to abandon that policy. It had not yet lost hope that individual and collective demarches and the example set by European representatives would bring about the necessary changes in South Africa by peaceful means.

11. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) requested that the text of the excellent introductory statement made at the preceding meeting by the Director of the Division of Human Rights should be reproduced as fully as possible.

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12. She believed that the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination should make it possible not only to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin - as stated in document E/5120, paragraph 7 - but in particular to secure the enjoyment of those rights and freedoms by millions of human beings. If the Decade attained its goals, that would be due in large part to the will of Governments which had understood the necessity for changes aimed at restoring the rights of those of their nationals who had too long been victims of racism and racial discrimination. In that connexion, a tribute should be paid to those Governments which had decided to abolish discriminatory provisions and to promulgate and apply laws putting an end to inequalities. Such decisions not only were a credit to those responsible for them but contributed to the maintenance of internal peace and the establishment, which was highly desirable in multiracial societies, of harmony and understanding.

13. Human beings needed to believe in their future in order to be able to assume their responsibilities. Lacking such motivation, they became unhappy, and the oppression and injustice to which they were subjected provoked in them rebellion which led to violence - violence for which no one could blame them, for it was justified. Such was the case in the Middle East and in southern Africa, notably in South Africa, where the population, after years of oppression and subjection, had spontaneously united to shake off the yoke and to reject injustice. Unfortunately, that development had led to bloody confrontations because of the blind obstinacy of régimes determined to pursue an ostrich-like policy regardless of the dangers it entailed. Although the international community had done everything to draw the attention of those régimes to the situation, had addressed to them appeals and urgent requests and had finally condemned them, they had not even made the effort to understand. Their victims had had to respond to the violence of repression with the violence of their just claims in order to compel them to cease ignoring reality.

14. Racial discrimination, far from being exclusively characteristic of southern Africa, existed to some extent everywhere under forms which were all the more dangerous when they were more subtle and about which the international community was not yet adequately informed. Hence it was the evils of that kind of discrimination which should be borne in mind when one expressed the hope that the Decade would attain its objectives. Moreover, that Decade would necessarily bring about changes in the countries where racial discrimination persisted, either because the leaders would want to give effect to the recommendations of the Decade or because the persons who were the victims of discrimination would themselves become aware at last of the denial of their rights. The role of the mass media in that process of heightening awareness should be stressed.

15. She wished to pay a tribute to the valuable contribution made by the United Nations system, which, devoted as it was to the cause of justice and peace, had organized many world conferences to discuss the problems of racial discrimination, apartheid and colonialism. She mentioned in that connexion the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination which was to be held within the framework of the Decade and she paid a tribute to Ghana, which, because of organizational

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considerations, had had the courage to renounce the opportunity to be host to the Conference. It would be desirable if that attitude was more generally manifested whenever an important conference was planned.

16. She hoped that a larger number of States would ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and she stressed the need to ensure the faithful application of the provisions of those Conventions, which might require a genuine political will on the part of States parties.

17. While the progress of science and technology had made possible a rapprochement among peoples, much remained to be done to put an end to ignorance and selfishness, which were the cause of so many evils and so much misunderstanding and injustice. It was essential to promote education, to enable persons to have a clear understanding of what was happening in the world and to encourage genuine respect for the principles of solidarity. She accordingly appealed for sincerity and unity of action, which alone could ensure the success of the enterprise to which all were committed.

18. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers on items 74 and 75 would be closed on Monday, 3 October, at 1 p.m.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.