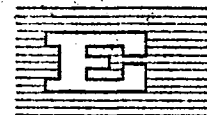


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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Thirty-seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1597th MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 12 February 1981, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. CAIERO RODRIGUES

(Brazil)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP OF EXPERTS (agenda item 6) (continued) (E/CN.4/1410; E/CN.4/1411; E/CN.4/1429; E/CN.4/1430; E/CN.4/NGO/290)

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- (a) STUDY IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES OF WAYS AND MEANS OF ENSURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS BEARING ON APARTHEID, RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
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1. Mr. ORTIZ RODRIGUEZ (Cuba), Chairman/Rapporteur of the Group of Three established under the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, introduced the report of the Group (E/CN.4/1417). He noted that the Group had made an exhaustive analysis of the reports submitted by States Parties under article VII of the Convention and had concluded that progress had been made in the presentation of reports. However, the Group had expressed concern at the fact that only 58 States had thus far become parties to the Convention and its conviction that ratification of that instrument on a universal basis and the implementation of its provisions were necessary for its effectiveness.

2. Mr. MUNTASSER (Organization of African Unity) said that one of the basic purposes of OAU was to promote international co-operation and understanding within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its foremost objective was the elimination of apartheid and all the human rights violations it involved. He welcomed the growing realization of the suffering caused by racial discrimination as practised under the apartheid system.

3. It was permissible to think that the Western groups which controlled world trade had a vested interest in the perpetuation of the apartheid system as a means of protecting their investments. The Western transnational corporations in South Africa relied on the availability of cheap labour, and the collapse of that system would mean loss of profits and investment opportunities which would damage the economies of certain Western countries. Changes could be introduced in South Africa only if investments were reduced and an economic embargo was imposed. The struggle against the apartheid system was a struggle between those possessing capital and advanced technology and an exploited class lacking capital and having limited education and poor technology. The exclusion of the majority of the population from the political life of their country and degrading treatment and torture must be brought to an end.

4. The accession to independence of Zimbabwe had dealt a blow to the racist forces which OAU had hoped would be followed up by the independence of illegally occupied Namibia. However, the recent attempt by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to facilitate an agreement between South Africa and SWAPO with a view to implementing the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia had failed because of South Africa's intransigence and its rejection of that plan as premature. OAU had not only strongly condemned South Africa's position in that regard but had also deplored the half-hearted efforts of the Western countries to bring the necessary pressure to bear on South Africa. It agreed with the Secretary-General that there could be no true and lasting peace in southern Africa as long as the majority of the population was excluded from political life and its most respected leaders were imprisoned or banned.

5. Mrs. KATINYK (Women's International Democratic Federation) said that WIDF was deeply concerned at the flagrant and massive violations of the human rights of women and children in South Africa and Namibia and was unrelenting in its efforts to end the racist régime's policy of domination and institutionalized exploitation. As a women's organization, it had helped draw the attention of world public opinion to the unfortunately deteriorating situation of women in that area, and welcomed the resolutions concerning that problem adopted at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women.

6. Apartheid would not have survived without the economic and military assistance provided by the major Western countries. Foreign monopolies controlled and exploited the natural resources of the area and propped up the minority racist régimes which protected their profits. All States which supported the racist régime of South Africa made themselves accomplices to the numerous and well-documented violations of the rights of women in southern Africa. Those violations which included glaring inequalities in the distribution of wealth, deportation to bantustans and poor-quality education, had reduced African women and their families to an inferior status and deprived them of dignity and freedom. As part of the apartheid régime's increasing repression, thousands of innocent persons were being imprisoned in South Africa and Namibia, and WIDF urged the Commission to do whatever it could to alleviate their sufferings. Through its repeated acts of aggression the racist régime of South Africa was also impeding development and preventing the exercise of human rights in neighbouring African States. That régime had created an explosive situation which was a threat to peace in Africa and throughout the world. WIDF therefore urged the Commission to do what it could to ensure the universal application of economic and other sanctions against South Africa under Chapter VII of the Charter. It also called upon it to take all possible steps to solve the problem of Namibia on the basis of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and to ensure implementation of the recommendations concerning assistance to women in southern Africa contained in the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women.

7. Mr. BRIMAH (Nigeria), noting that only 58 States had ratified the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, appealed to those States which had not yet done so to accede to that instrument. Universal acceptance of the Convention would help remove the last vestiges of apartheid, which all Member States deplored.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.