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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, A/C.3/L.1633, A/C.3/L.1635):

(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

1. Mr. FORSHELL (Sweden) said that he had had the privilege of taking part in the International Conference on Human Rights, which had had a formidable agenda. It had been said that the results of the Conference—as embodied in its Final Act (A/CONF.32/41)—could not be considered to have exhausted the mandate given to it. Comments of that kind had usually been made by persons not directly familiar with human rights work and therefore not fully aware of the extent to which that field was becoming increasingly fraught with elements of a more or less political nature. The members of the Third Committee, however, with their experience of work in the human rights field, would surely be amazed at the ground the Conference had been able to cover, owing primarily to the leadership provided by the President of the Conference, the Chairmen of the two Committees and the Bureau of the Conference as a whole and the excellent performance of the Executive Secretary and the other members of the Secretariat.

2. The Swedish Government regarded the achievements of the Conference as a positive and most constructive contribution to United Nations work in the field of human rights for years to come. The Conference had never been intended to act as a kind of political organ with the task of devising final and binding solutions to the various specific problems

that existed in the field of human rights; rather, its purpose had been to serve as a catalyst for ideas and a focus of new initiatives and incentives to be submitted to the competent United Nations organs for consideration in the course of their work within the framework of the established division of labour in the United Nations system. That was all the more natural, in that the composition of the individual national delegations to the Conference had been rather heterogeneous. General Assembly resolution 2217 C (XXI) had invited participating States to include in their delegations "eminent persons whose qualifications in the field of human rights would enable them to make valuable contributions to the work of the Conference". That category had been well represented, and the diversity of the participants had helped to make the discussions interesting and the flow of ideas continuous.

3. Since the Conference had not been an organ for formal decisions, all the ideas and requests that emanated from it should, as a matter of course, be transmitted to and further considered by States, by the competent United Nations organs and by the other organizations concerned. That was what the sponsors of the thirty-four-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1) had in mind.

4. Introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, he said that the operative part really began with operative paragraph 4. The term "organizations", as used in that paragraph and in paragraph 5, referred to organizations outside the United Nations family. There had been some discussion among the sponsors on the question whether the request to States and organizations to assist in giving publicity to the Proclamation of Teheran should be coupled with a similar appeal regarding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, in view of the fact that the General Assembly had often made such appeals in the past, it had been decided to restrict the reference in the draft resolution to the Proclamation of Teheran.

5. Paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 related to the United Nations family. The Conference had covered a great deal of ground, and many of its resolutions were primarily of interest to organs other than those of the United Nations proper. Since the Conference had obviously not been able to claim complete expertise in all the matters it had dealt with, the organs concerned were invited "to take action, as appropriate" — in other words, to bear the resolutions and recommendations of the Conference in mind in their approach to their own specific responsibilities.

6. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously, and with that end in view they were prepared to do all they could to accommodate

the views of other delegations. It was unnecessary to include controversial matters in a resolution of so general a nature, especially as such matters could be discussed in connexion with the other, more specific draft resolutions which were to be introduced.

7. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) said that the celebration of the International Year for Human Rights was an occasion for evaluating achievements in all fields of human rights during the twenty years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration. It was also an occasion for remembering those who had helped to draw up the Declaration and who were no longer with the Committee, and for paying a tribute to those, like Mr. Baroodi of Saudi Arabia, who continued to contribute to the realization of man's aspirations. The passage of twenty eventful years had seen changes not only in the material conditions of life, but also in man's world outlook. It was true that the general situation in the world left little room for optimism; human rights were being violated in many areas, and racism, disease, famine, war and ignorance were rampant. Nevertheless, the Declaration had slowly but surely spread its light; it had helped to alleviate much suffering, and had provided the basis for much national and international legislation. Indeed, it had started an irreversible trend by making men aware of the need for progress.

8. The International Conference on Human Rights, to which his Government had been privileged to act as host, had been regarded by many as the main event of the International Year for Human Rights. Although the results of the Conference had been decried in some quarters, he considered that it had admirably discharged the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly in its resolution 2081 (XX); it had adopted a Proclamation and twenty-eight resolutions dealing with all aspects of human rights. It had also stressed the fundamental link between the maintenance of peace and the promotion of human rights and had recommended that a meeting of political and spiritual leaders should be held to consider the causes of, and the solutions to, recourse to violence. It had also recommended the Secretary-General to transmit to the competent organs of the United Nations the eighteen draft resolutions (A/CONF.32/41, annex V) which it had been unable to consider through lack of time. The Proclamation of Teheran was an historic document and represented a decisive step towards the consolidation of a global concept of human rights. It broke away from the traditional concept of human rights and recognized, for the first time in such a document, that human freedoms were indissolubly linked to economic, social and cultural rights. The Proclamation also reflected the unanimous will of the international community to redouble its efforts to implement human rights and to eliminate illiteracy, racism, violence, hunger and disease. The Proclamation adapted the principles of the Universal Declaration to meet the problems of 1968, and it represented the aspirations of the new generation, making it clear that human rights must be respected if men were to transcend their superficial differences, which were aggravated by the overcrowded conditions in which they now lived.

9. With regard to part (a) of the item under discussion—measures and activities undertaken in con-

nexion with the International Year for Human Rights—he commended the Director of the Division of Human Rights for his excellent statement at the preceding meeting, and the Secretariat for the high quality of the documentation it had produced. He drew particular attention to the significant contribution which non-governmental organizations had continued to make to the promotion of human rights during the International Year.

10. In his delegation's view, the objectives set for the International Year for Human Rights had been fully realized, but there was no room for complacency. The Committee should now adopt a broader approach and attempt to make an assessment not only of the past, but of the present and of future prospects; for, while the International Year marked an anniversary, it also summoned the Committee to continue to look forward. With that in mind, he would like to submit to the Committee some thoughts on action which might be taken to follow up the International Year, and more particularly the Teheran Conference. The Director-General of UNESCO had said, in his introduction to the UNESCO publication entitled *Le droit d'être un homme* that, although it might seem that everything possible had already been said and done, there was always room for improvement and, however great the efforts and sacrifices that had been made, the price of freedom had not yet been paid. Millions of human beings were waiting, and they should not be allowed to wait in vain.

11. Moreover, as His Imperial Majesty the Shahinshah had pointed out in his opening address to the Conference (see A/CONF.32/41, annex II), political rights without social rights, justice under law without social justice, and political democracy without economic democracy no longer had any true meaning. In assuming their obligations under the United Nations Charter to promote and defend human rights, Member States had thereby assumed the obligation to work together in order to create the economic and social conditions in which those rights would be exercised.

12. The least, then, that the Third Committee could do was to try to promote the implementation of as many of the recommendations of the Conference as possible. He was certain that the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1623/Rev.1), of which Iran was a sponsor, would ensure that those recommendations were implemented, and he hoped that, like the Proclamation of Teheran, it would be adopted unanimously. It should not be forgotten that, as the International Year for Human Rights drew to an end, world opinion was watching the United Nations and would find it incomprehensible that any States should have doubts and reservations about human rights. He therefore appealed to delegations not to submit amendments that would change the structure of a draft which attempted, after weeks of consultations, to take into account all points of view. Differences of opinion, however justified they might be, should not be stressed in the debate marking the end of the International Year. On the contrary, the Committee should concentrate on its not inconsiderable areas of agreement. The doubts and reservations expressed twenty years previously, during the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, had proved unjustified, as all Member States now unreservedly recognized the 1948 text. As Pope

Paul VI had said in his message to the Teheran Conference (see A/CONF.32, annex III), to speak of human rights was to affirm a common good of mankind, and to work for the building of a fraternal community. It was particularly important, at a time when the very future of mankind was in jeopardy and when the "post-industrial" society threatened to substitute the productive value of man for human dignity, that the international community should reaffirm its adherence to the principles enunciated in the Universal Declaration. Respect for those rights would be a triumph for the poor, the ignored and the down-trodden, and would lead to a more balanced distribution of human initiative throughout the world. The path ahead was long and difficult, but the problems should merely act as a challenge. The full implementation of human rights was a long-term undertaking which required the renunciation of the short-term interests and selfish points of view which were all too often apparent during the Committee's discussions. Members must look to the future with patience and assurance.

13. Dr. MALAN (World Health Organization) said that those who were familiar with the growing and spreading WHO programmes of activity would not need to be told of the World Health Organization's interest in the International Year for Human Rights. The WHO secretariat had read with close attention the Secretary-General's report on measures and activities undertaken in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights (A/7195, A/7195/Add.1 and Add.3-6). However, WHO had been omitted from the description of activities undertaken in connexion with the theme chosen by the Secretary-General for 1969, and a brief statement might therefore be of value, especially since the October-November 1968 issue of World Health had been devoted to human rights, with special regard to handicapped children.

14. One of the most encouraging developments of recent times had been the increasing interest shown by Governments in the well-being of their citizens, as was evidenced by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted unanimously by the General Assembly on 16 December 1966. Article 12 of the Covenant recognized the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and suggested steps which should be taken to achieve the full realization of that right. The right to a standard of living adequate for health, including the right to medical care, was also one of the social rights proclaimed in article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

15. From its inception in 1948, WHO had devoted all its efforts and available resources to the realization of that right; for, in the absence of health, the other human rights became meaningless indeed. Health was one of the essential goals of mankind, as was evident from man's eternal struggle towards the conquest of disease and the prolongation of life—a goal which WHO defined as meaning the prevention of disease, the promotion of health, restoration of health and rehabilitation of the handicapped.

16. The right to health could not be exercised by people unless the conditions were present which made

for a healthy life and unless health services and health facilities were available. That twofold goal—the fight against disease and the upgrading of the status of health to a human right—was at the basis of the very existence of WHO and represented the guiding principles of its work and the ideal target for its efforts. Over the past twenty years, WHO had consistently striven to deepen the search for agreement on health requirements and to ensure that that human right was exercised in the light of contemporary technical progress. It was actively engaged in assisting Governments to co-ordinate and upgrade the services they already had, and to extend coverage and improve quality in an orderly way as resources became available.

17. That was a vast programme of work, in which the improvement of maternal and child health, nutrition, nursing, health education, environmental health activities and programmes against specific diseases played an important role in working towards the goal of ensuring for all, and especially for the rural population, a minimum level of health services. In pursuing their specific aims, member States had introduced modern health measures to areas which had previously known nothing of modern medicine and had undertaken programmes of training for various categories of workers required for utilization in, and expansion of, basic health services.

18. In providing such assistance, WHO recognized the desire of all to have health facilities within easy reach of their homes or places of work and the need felt by all health authorities for local machinery through which they could implement national health programmes and from which they could receive information about local health conditions. The growing concern of Governments, the rising expectations of the population and the techniques available to public health provided the necessary conditions for the establishment of such services, if the required manpower and funds could be found.

19. A modern world, which was anxiously pursuing the interrelated objectives of economic and social progress, was now adding a new dimension to the concept of health. It was within the context of those interrelated objectives that health assumed more and more importance in the evolution of a strategy for growth. That resulted from the recognition of the fact that investment in health improved the quality of human resources, which was one of the three major sources of economic growth, the others being natural resources and capital.

20. The right to health, by its very nature, posed complex problems which called for a variety of diversified but co-ordinated solutions in one general policy. Techniques for the achievement of the physical and mental protection of individuals required constant adaptation, taking into account the rapid progress of scientific research and the consequences of the rapid social changes which were taking place in all countries. There was certainly a need to increase and diversify the infrastructure of health services, but techniques and institutions should be created which provided equal opportunities for inhabitants of urban and

rural areas to obtain preventive and curative health services of uniform quality.

21. It was gratifying to report that the World Health Organization had given, and would continue to give,

due emphasis to programmes which helped individuals in the exercise of their rights.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.