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**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

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**THIRD COMMITTEE, 1852nd
MEETING**

Friday, 29 October 1971,
at 3.20 p.m.

NEW YORK

Chairman: Mrs. Helvi SIPILÄ (Finland).

AGENDA ITEM 54

Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (*continued*) (A/8367 and Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1, A/8403, chap. XVII, sects. B and F; A/8418, A/8439, A/C.3/L.1871):

- (a) International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General;
- (b) Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;
- (c) Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he had been impressed by the universal approach of the Costa Rican representative but then had realized that it was no more universal than the United Nations without the People's Republic of China. Costa Rica's appeal to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to allow Jews to leave the country so that they could go to Israel was merely an echo of Israel's own slogan and ignored the millions of Palestinians now living as refugees or in territories under Israeli occupation. The representative of Costa Rica did not appear to be ready to extend the same rights to the Arabs as to the Jews. Everyone knew that in all human rights instruments the right to leave a country could not be separated from the right of a person to return to his own country, but the Costa Rican representative chose to ignore the latter part, namely, the right of the displaced Palestinians to return to their homes.

2. Anyone wishing to propagate the doctrine of Zionism would have to take certain facts into consideration: that every Zionist colonist who went to Israel would displace an Arab and would add to the economic and military capacity of the State which was occupying Palestine and parts of the territories of three Member States of the United Nations; that assistance to Israel for the purpose of enabling Jews to immigrate into the war zone could be considered a violation of the laws of neutrality; and, finally, that not all Jews were Zionists and that Zionism was forced on many of them.

3. He hoped that the representative of Costa Rica and others with similar views would understand that their "appeal" was tantamount to a death sentence for the Palestinians.

4. Mr. DAS (India), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he was raising the question of discrimination practised in East Pakistan only because the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had itself raised the question at its third and fourth sessions. The representative of Pakistan had raised two questions concerning India: that of the Nagas and that of the caste system.

5. The Nagas were a community of some 300,000 persons, which in India was a very small number. Nevertheless, because of their distinct culture, language and customs, they had been granted separate statehood in 1962. Absolute peace now prevailed in Nagaland and economic development was proceeding rapidly as a result of financial assistance given to the State by the Central Government of India. Nagas occupied high positions in Government service not only in their own State but in the neighbouring states of India and in the Central Government. He would state emphatically that the secessionist movements which Pakistan and other countries had tried to build up in Nagaland had all completely failed because the Nagas had refused to support them. In Nagaland there had never been repression by the armed forces, as there was in East Pakistan. He need only state that whereas 9.5 million Bengalis had been driven out by the West Pakistan army, not a single Naga had become a refugee.

6. With regard to the question of the caste system, it was true that it existed among the Hindus, but it was confined to religious practices. In economic, social, political and cultural life there was no trace of the caste system in present-day Indian society. Moreover, the Constitution provided adequate safeguards and preferential treatment for the backward castes and classes in order to raise them to the level of other sections of society. Many members of the backward castes held high positions. The existence of the caste system was certainly neither useful nor desirable, but the important thing was what the Government had done to combat it and to protect the interests of those communities. He realized, of course, that the representative of Pakistan found it difficult to understand the significance of constitutional guarantees and an independent system of justice, which were the basis of a democratic system such as the one operating in India. In that connexion, it should be recalled that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had found India's report entirely satisfactory and had never questioned the facts submitted.

7. The representative of Pakistan had also said that the speaker had made false statements. He would like to ask that representative whether it was or was not a fact that the people of West Pakistan were entirely different from the people of East Pakistan, culturally, linguistically and

ethnically. No one could deny that Bengali was the language of East Pakistan and not the language of West Pakistan, or that the people of East Pakistan had had to struggle and suffer for nine years to have their language recognized as one of the official languages of Pakistan, although it was the language spoken by the majority of the country's population. The extent of the discrimination practised by the Government of Pakistan against the population of East Pakistan would be seen from certain statistics. West Pakistan had a population of 55 million whereas the figure for East Pakistan was 75 million; yet 90 per cent of the army came from West Pakistan and less than 10 per cent from East Pakistan. Eighty-five per cent of the country's civil servants came from West Pakistan and only 15 per cent from East Pakistan. The economic differences were even greater. West Pakistan's share of foreign economic aid was over 80 per cent while East Pakistan's was less than 20 per cent; for 1969-1970, exports from West Pakistan had amounted to approximately \$350 million and the figure for East Pakistan was the same, but imports for that period had amounted to \$690 million for West Pakistan and only \$380 million for East Pakistan. Participation in the gross national product increase amounted to 58.4 per cent for West Pakistan but only 30.6 per cent for East Pakistan. Development expenditure amounted to \$6,252 million for West Pakistan and only \$3,481 million for East Pakistan; *per capita* income was 61 per cent higher in West Pakistan than in East Pakistan. Expenditure on agricultural research had amounted to \$0.75 million in West Pakistan but only \$0.23 million in East Pakistan and expenditure on medical research had amounted to \$0.21 million in West Pakistan and only \$0.04 million in East Pakistan; expenditure by the Atomic Energy Commission had amounted to \$54.40 million for West Pakistan and only \$7.15 million for East Pakistan; expenditure by the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research had amounted to \$16.85 million for West Pakistan and only \$8.4 million for East Pakistan. If those facts did not prove that discrimination was practised by the Government of Pakistan against the majority of its people, he wondered what discrimination meant.

8. Mrs. BARISH (Costa Rica), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic interpreted the right of reply quite flexibly, since the representative of Costa Rica had not referred to his country. Costa Rica had spoken in the exercise of its right of free expression, like other representatives to whom the Syrian representative had not referred in his protest.

9. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he had spoken because Costa Rica's attitude in denying the rights of the Palestinians had been made clear the previous year in connexion with the question of deleting the reference to Palestine in the draft resolution which had become General Assembly resolution 2649 (XXV).

10. Mrs. BARISH (Costa Rica), replying to the Syrian representative, said that her delegation had requested a separate vote on the paragraph of the draft resolution in which Palestine was mentioned because it had felt that a general resolution on the right to self-determination should not specify the Middle East conflict. It had finally been decided by a majority that the reference to Palestine should

remain, but the reasons for Costa Rica's attitude had appeared in the record.

11. Mr. TORUÑO CORONEL (Nicaragua) said that the Government of Nicaragua had informed the Secretary-General in a note verbale that article 36 of the Constitution of Nicaragua clearly provided that all Nicaraguans were equal before the law and that no privileges were granted by reason of birth, social condition or race. The people of Nicaragua regarded discrimination against any person as inhuman and unnatural. Slavery had been abolished in Nicaragua in 1821 on the declaration of the independence of the united provinces of Central America; it had been restored only for a brief period when the adventurer William Walker had proclaimed himself President of Nicaragua and a short time later had been abolished for ever. Thenceforth, Nicaragua had faithfully respected human dignity and the people of the country all worked together for the greater good of that country. He therefore hoped that all the countries where discrimination was still practised would change their attitude without delay in the interests of mankind as a whole.

12. Mrs. CAULKER (Sierra Leone) congratulated the Director of the Division of Human Rights on his statement and expressed her delegation's appreciation of the efforts that the Division was making to combat and eliminate racial discrimination. Her delegation looked forward to the achievement of the goals set for the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and hoped that the Year would be a landmark in the struggle against racism and would help to reduce it to a shameful memory of the past.

13. Her Government had taken steps to publicize, especially in educational institutions, the purpose and significance of the International Year. It had also decided that during the year the *Journal of Education*, a quarterly published by the Ministry of Education, would bear on its cover the special design approved by the Secretary-General symbolizing the concept of equality and non-discrimination on grounds of race or colour.

14. With regard to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (A/8418), her delegation considered that there was need for a clearer definition of the Committee's terms of reference within the scope of the Convention. It felt that the General Assembly, in considering the Committee's report, could give it greater powers to enable it to attain the objectives of the Convention. There had been some criticism of the work of the Committee, especially with reference to the question of complaints, which involved both Member States parties to the Convention and non-member States parties to the Convention. As the Convention was silent on that aspect of the Committee's work, and because of the importance of the question, her delegation considered that the General Assembly should give the Committee clear directives and should say whether the Committee was competent to utilize the expert knowledge of such bodies as the ILO, UNESCO and WHO.

15. The question of racial discrimination was one which concerned nearly every nation. Over the years the question of *apartheid* had been discussed in the United Nations with

monotonous regularity and the arguments put forward by the South African Government had been effectively and repeatedly demolished. Similarly, the evil manifestations of that policy had been denounced. The question therefore arose whether it was necessary or wise to prolong a debate on a topic which aroused strong emotions and which had been categorically rejected by the United Nations in innumerable resolutions. That did not mean that her delegation's abhorrence of *apartheid* had lessened; on the contrary, her Government had contributed to the United Nations Trust Fund for southern Africa and was taking steps to increase its contribution in the coming years as a token of its undying faith in humanity and in the absolute equality of all mankind. Her country would continue to support, materially and morally, all aspects of the struggle against racial discrimination, especially in southern Africa.

16. In concentrating on the question of *apartheid* it was easy to ignore other forms of discrimination, such as discrimination on grounds of sex. The female sex had been discriminated against in all fields; it was enough to look at the General Committee of the United Nations General Assembly to realize the truth of that assertion. Women were now occupying their place in society and had accepted the challenge of playing their part in shaping the lives of peoples and nations, thus forcing the opposite sex to understand that the formation of national values could not be complete without the female touch. Her delegation hoped that, in the International Year, women would occupy their proper place in the economic, social and political life of their countries. The world community as a whole should remember that, in their concerted efforts to fight racial discrimination, discrimination on grounds of sex should be uppermost in their minds.

17. Her Government had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and it reaffirmed its belief in the enjoyment of rights by everyone, regardless of race, colour, national or ethnic origin. In particular, it affirmed its belief in the right to equal treatment before the tribunals, the right to security of person and protection by the State against violence, the enjoyment of political rights, the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of the State, the right of anyone to leave any country, including his own, and return to his country, the right to nationality, marriage and choice of spouse, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and choice of employment, the right to housing, public health, education and training, and the right to participation in cultural activities and to access to any place intended for use by the general public.

18. Miss DE LA MAZA (Dominican Republic) said that her delegation condemned all practices calculated to keep minorities out of the life of nations and to relegate them to a less than human status. The problem of discrimination had existed in the world from time immemorial and men had always tried to justify their prejudices on the basis of certain philosophies of a nature to support their point of view and to protect their interests. The myths about the superiority of certain races had been demolished by science, which had proved again and again that there were no differences between the various human groups. Unfortu-

nately, there were still many nations which continued to apply discriminatory practices based on obsolete principles which had no scientific foundation, as was the case in southern Africa. In pursuing those policies, such nations were creating situations which would eventually prove harmful to themselves, for it was an undoubted fact that there could be no international, regional or national peace without justice and that there was nothing so unjust as racial discrimination and the denial of the right to emigrate. Discrimination was a complex problem, for there were various levels and methods of discrimination, but they were all born of man's tendency to establish his superiority on the basis of the inferiority of others. It had been said that religious discrimination had no place in the present discussion, but even if that might be a useful way of simplifying the work of the Committee it was not possible, in practice, to draw an exact line between racial discrimination and religious discrimination, both of which led to the degradation of man and threatened world peace. The most alarming forms of discrimination were *apartheid* and the denial to certain minorities, in some countries of the world, of the right to emigrate enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

19. It might be said that the type of discrimination practised in the various countries could serve as a criterion by which to measure their humanity. At the present day the periods of history that had been characterized by religious intolerance, slavery and discrimination against women in public life were regarded with horror and considered out of date. Nevertheless, there were still countries which, although they had achieved a high economic, scientific and cultural level, applied discriminatory practices based on philosophies and concepts of the universe which were in keeping with the theories of Copernicus but not with those of Einstein.

20. The time had come for the United Nations to take all the necessary action to lead the nations which practised discrimination towards a new path consonant with the requirements of human dignity. It should be borne in mind, however, that there was no country in the world that was devoid of discrimination and that, although in some countries the struggle against discrimination on grounds of race, religion or sex had been successful, there were other, more subtle, forms of discrimination that were hard to eradicate, such as economic, educational, social and cultural discrimination. All countries, therefore, should carefully scrutinize their practices and should work tirelessly to eliminate any conditions which ran counter to the achievement of peace based on justice and human dignity.

21. In conclusion, she said that her delegation appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General, thanks to which 400 people had been given permits to leave the Soviet Union. Her delegation urged Governments to allow those who did not feel that they were part of the national population and who were minorities suffering discrimination to emigrate. In so doing, those Governments would win general sympathy and acclaim.

22. Miss MENSAH (Togo) said that racial discrimination was a disaster that was a direct threat to peace and justice in the world. It was unthinkable that the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should in some

regions be applied to some people and not to others. In South Africa and Southern Rhodesia the white minority denied the black majority their political, civil and economic rights, thus defying the conscience of the world, and were so cynical as to try to obtain the complicity of other African States.

23. Togo's position with regard to the "dialogue" that the South African leaders were trying to establish was quite clear: its people were not prepared to shake a hand that was stained with blood of their African brothers. It would be a farce to carry on a dialogue with the aggressors in which the oppressed had no part. The blacks of South Africa were already rising up to fight and to liberate their country from the régime of slavery to which they were subjected. There was certainly reason to establish a dialogue, but it must be a dialogue between the white minority and the 14 million Africans herded in the reserves.

24. Slavery and colonization had deprived the Africans of their indigenous culture and civilization. But that was not all: the deep causes of racial discrimination were rooted in the exploitation of both persons and natural resources. South Africa was one of the richest countries of the world in minerals. It produced most of the gold in the so-called "free" world, it was the greatest producer of diamonds and the third greatest producer of uranium. Investment in South Africa produced 15 per cent interest, a rate unequalled in other parts of the world. The exploitation of all those resources benefited the whites only, for it was they who held both political and economic power.

25. Of no less importance was discrimination in education. Attendance at school was obligatory for white children but

not for black, and the curriculum was different for the two races. The conditions in the schools attended by black children were appalling.

26. The racist leaders of South Africa put forward a false argument of survival to explain their odious intransigence. They had invented theories to trample underfoot the dignity of the blacks and they feared that the blacks might repay them in the same coin. The blacks, however, did not hate the whites as human beings. What they detested was injustice and discrimination. They also detested the arrogance of the whites, who humiliated them in their own native land.

27. While it was true that there were racial conflicts in all parts of the world, such conflicts were more flagrant and outrageous in southern Africa because racial discrimination was an official policy there. In the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination attention should be drawn to the pernicious effects of that immoral policy, and both individual and collective efforts to eliminate it should be redoubled. It was of concern to all mankind that South Africa's partners should endeavour to persuade the white minority in that country to put an end to its disregard of human rights. Where there was oppression, there must of necessity be a struggle, and a just cause was never lost.

28. The CHAIRMAN announced that the time-limit for the submission of draft resolutions on the item would be 10.30 a.m. on 3 November.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.