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Chairman: Mrs. Mara RADIĆ (Yugoslavia).

AGENDA ITEM 58

International Year for Human Rights (continued):

- (a) Programme of Measures and Activities to be undertaken in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights: report of the Secretary-General (continued) (A/6687, A/6866 and Add.1);
- (b) Report of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights (continued) (A/6354, A/6670 and Corr.1)

1. Mrs. HARMAN (Israel) stated, in exercise of her right of reply, that her delegation took full responsibility for its remarks, irrespective of the sources of its information. She believed that the USSR representative had been referring to certain facts she might have given relating to the denial of human rights to some citizens of his country. She understood his irritation but thought that if the testimony of all the non-governmental organizations which drew attention to infringements of human rights was to be rejected, it did not bode well for the success of United Nations efforts during the International Year for Human Rights.

2. Miss CAO-PINNA (Italy) stated that outside the circles directly interested in the forthcoming International Conference on Human Rights a large part of the public did not even know that 1968 had been designated as the International Year for Human Rights.

3. Her delegation agreed with the representative of Yugoslavia that, during the past twenty years, the United Nations had given more attention to the preparation of international instruments and to the creation of international systems of control than to the creation of the conditions which were required for the effective recognition of human rights, and that it was now necessary to develop programmes aimed at creating those conditions. Her delegation, therefore, attached particular importance to item 11

of the draft provisional agenda of the Conference (A/6670 and Corr.1, annex II) and especially sub-item e on measures to strengthen the defence of human rights and freedoms of individuals, which, because of its general nature, must come before the consideration of all forms of discrimination. Her delegation was well aware of the difficulties of formulating a "human rights programme" and believed that the content of the programme and its methods of implementation and evaluation would require the co-operation of the best experts in the fields of international action and human rights and the co-operation of all who could make a contribution and were sincerely interested in the defence of human rights. For that reason it would be wrong to close the door to non-governmental organizations. How could anyone conceive of a programme whose implementation required the co-operation of those organizations without inviting them to participate in the Conference? It was not possible to disregard the valuable contribution that the non-governmental organizations made to the work of all the functional commissions and sub-commissions of the Economic and Social Council. How, for instance, could one think of not inviting the international women's associations when the provisional agenda of the Conference included a unified long-term United Nations programme for the advancement of women? For that reason her delegation considered that non-governmental organizations having consultative status in the Economic and Social Council should participate in the International Conference on Human Rights. It was not necessary to establish new criteria for selection since the appropriate committee of the Economic and Social Council already carefully screened the non-governmental organizations which it recognized. Furthermore, the rules of procedure of the Conference gave the President and others the necessary powers to ensure the proper progress of the Conference.

4. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights had shown boundless ambition in the provisional programme it had prepared for the Conference. Three years would not be too long for dealing with all the items contained in the programme. Even if committees were set up to consider some of the items the problem of co-ordinating their proceedings would remain. Noting that the first preambular paragraph of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights referred to the rights "of all members of the human family", he regretted that, twenty years later, some people believed that a State which was not a Member of the United Nations should not be invited to the Conference. Human rights should know no barriers.

5. Although technical progress had made the life of many people more comfortable and had helped to make them aware of their rights, it had also done great harm to some of the values recognized in the Universal Declaration, particularly for the family, which article 16 (3) called "the natural and fundamental group unit of society". He did not wish to criticize the feminist movement, but the fact that women had begun to work on a footing of equality with men would perhaps be detrimental to the next generation. Children rebelled against mothers who neglected them and that gave rise to many social evils, such as the use of narcotics. Liberty had been confused with licence and the family was in danger of disintegrating. In that respect the situation was much worse than in 1948.

6. Freedom of opinion had been replaced by propaganda. News was censored and those who produced the news practised self-censorship. The most important right was that stated in article 3 of the Universal Declaration, the right to life, liberty and security of person. In the world of today, however, that right was violated countless times. Many persons were being killed by terrible weapons such as napalm and poison gas. No one could claim that those events were beyond the control of the United Nations; if that were the case, the Declaration of Human Rights would be of little value. Such events, however, were not really beyond human control; they were not natural disasters, but acts committed methodically by other men, acts which the international community must stop. The international community must cease to have a split personality, recognizing and defending human rights theoretically in the United Nations while it constantly violated them in practice.

7. The question of the non-governmental organizations was one of the main causes of disagreement in the Committee. He had the highest esteem for many of those organizations, but realized that many countries did not have non-governmental organizations and that their participation in the Conference would create an imbalance. Non-governmental organizations could, however, submit papers to the Conference without attending it. He suggested a solution for those countries which were interested in the participation of non-governmental organizations, namely, that they should appoint members of those organizations as their representatives. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of education as a means of securing the effective implementation of human rights and the important role that UNESCO could play in that connexion.

8. Mr. HANDL (Czechoslovakia) stated that his country had always supported all constructive measures aimed at the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and believed that the International Year for Human Rights could contribute positively to the development of the ideas and principles enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant United Nations documents. The most important event of the International Year would unquestionably be the International Conference on Human Rights, whose work could be particularly useful in future planning for the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In that connexion he believed that the report of the

Preparatory Committee (A/6670 and Corr.1) constituted a sound basis for the final decisions to be adopted by the General Assembly concerning the Conference.

9. His delegation approved of the draft provisional agenda of the Conference prepared by the Preparatory Committee (A/6670 and Corr.1, annex II) and particularly welcomed the important place given in the agenda to the consideration of measures to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, including the policy of apartheid, and to the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination. It fully concurred with the recommendations of the International Seminar on Apartheid, Racial Discrimination and Colonialism in Southern Africa (A/6818), which had been held in Kitwe (Zambia), that the plans and programmes for the International Year for Human Rights should give special prominence to the problems considered at the Seminar.

10. The Conference should also devote considerable attention to the problems of the implementation of economic, cultural and social rights, which constituted a necessary condition for the effective enjoyment of all other human rights, and his delegation fully supported the recommendation of the United Nations Seminar on the realization of economic and social rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, held in Warsaw in August 1967, to the effect that the report of the Seminar should be submitted to the Conference as one of the documents serving as a basis for discussion.

11. With regard to the organization of the Conference, he reiterated his view that it should be open to all States, without any discrimination, since the exclusion for political and discriminatory reasons of any State which was fully qualified and prepared to participate in the work of the Conference, such as the German Democratic Republic, would be contrary to the aims and purposes proclaimed by the General Assembly for 1968.

12. His delegation fully supported the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee concerning the participation in the Conference of the League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity, but had serious reservations concerning the attendance of the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States, whose fundamentally political character would not allow them to contribute to the solution of the problems which would be discussed, apart from the fact that the latter organization practised discrimination against a State belonging to its region and constantly interfered in that State's internal affairs, which made it hard to conceive that its representative would defend the principles of non-discrimination and the right of every nation to choose freely the political system it desired.

13. The problem of the participation of non-governmental organizations was both controversial and of far-reaching importance, because, although many of those organizations undoubtedly did constructive work, there were many others whose contribution to the United Nations work in the economic, social and human rights fields was highly questionable. Moreover, some of them, like the International League for

the Rights of Man, openly abused their consultative status to make slanderous and tendentious attacks on the socialist States and some African and Asian States, while others were financed by the Central Intelligence Agency to carry out espionage and other clandestine activities in the interests of the United States. The above reasons had led the Economic and Social Council to adopt resolution 1225 (XLII), by which it had decided to review the criteria for the admission of non-governmental organizations to consultative status and the nature and activities of each organization already enjoying that status.

14. Consequently, his delegation did not think it would be appropriate to invite non-governmental organizations to participate in the Conference or, if they were invited, they should be limited to a small number of organizations the good faith of which was beyond question and the composition of which was truly representative of the various geographical regions, whether or not their consultative status was recognized by the Economic and Social Council.

15. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the International Year for Human Rights, and in particular the International Conference, would help to stop violations of human rights, especially in their most brutal forms, and to further human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world.

16. Mrs. SORIANO (Philippines) expressed her delegation's hope for the success of the International Year for Human Rights. Her people regarded their individual liberties as their most cherished possession and for that reason had recently set up a council to hear complaints from private citizens whose rights had been threatened.

17. She explained that the laws of her country guaranteed complete freedom of thought and expression and religious toleration and gave a brief list of its achievements in the construction of roads, schools and irrigation systems and in aid to rural areas. Philippine women, who took an active part in all spheres of political and social life, were some of the most emancipated in Asia, as had been evident at the Seminar on Measures required for the Advancement of Women held at Manila in 1966.

18. Her delegation hoped that future events would produce more concrete results with regard to the acceptance of the United Nations instruments relating to human rights, of which the Philippines had already acceded to ten, and signed five; it hoped soon to approve the rest of the international agreements on the subject.

19. As for preparations for the celebration of the International Year for Human Rights, her country had already created a national committee to organize related events in all sectors of national life. The Post Office was to issue a commemorative stamp and there would be special radio and television programmes on the subject. Civic organizations had been asked to collaborate with the Government and had offered to organize lectures and seminars.

20. Her delegation supported the provisional agenda drafted by the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights (A/6670 and

Corr.1, annex II) and thought that non-governmental organizations should be invited to participate, along with representatives of the specialized agencies.

21. The Begum ISA (Pakistan) said that the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms had at times been slowed down by the intransigent attitude of some of the members of the United Nations system, so that issues which had been of crucial importance twenty years before were still urgent and pressing. It would therefore be preferable to concentrate on those paramount issues during the International Year for Human Rights and at the Conference, especially since, if no selection of items were made, the Conference would merely become a general debate on human rights problems.

22. Her delegation was in agreement with the proposed provisional agenda drafted by the Preparatory Committee but thought that special attention should be focused on burning topics like the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination in general and the policy of apartheid in particular, and the importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination and of the speedy granting of independence to countries and peoples, because without some substantial achievement in that direction the International Year for Human Rights and the Conference would have little impact on the development of human rights.

23. The choice of the country which was to be host to the Conference was very appropriate. The Pakistan Government had made plans to celebrate the International Year for Human Rights in the widest possible manner; special meetings were to be held in schools, colleges and public places to explain the Universal Declaration and the Press, radio and television would be used to publicize the Declaration, which would be printed and distributed in the different languages of the country; the theme of human rights would be the basis of debates and seminars in schools and universities and a special commemorative stamp would be issued.

24. Miss GROZA (Romania) expressed her conviction that the International Year for Human Rights would represent an important stage in the United Nations promotion of human rights, which had already, during the past twenty years, produced encouraging results. It was necessary to mention only the unanimous acceptance of the principle of peoples' right to self-determination and to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources—which was stated in various conventions on human rights—and the progress made in the elimination of colonialism; also the inclusion of the right to work among the fundamental human rights.

25. The aim of the International Year was to make such achievements known to the world public in order to persuade it to participate more fully in efforts in that sphere. She thought that the celebrations marking the International Year should be of an active nature and devoted principally to a search for ways of eliminating all forms of violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the creation of the necessary conditions for the respect of those principles.

26. The draft provisional agenda for the Conference (A/6670 and Corr.1, annex II) appeared to fulfil to a

great extent the hopes placed in it. Her delegation agreed with the inclusion of item 11, which concerned the study of essential matters that were still, unfortunately, very urgent, and the preparation of a human rights programme for the future. Those were problems of fundamental importance for the proper promotion of human rights under present-day conditions. In the United Nations, it had often been stressed that, without respect for the self-determination of peoples, the eradication of colonialism in all its forms and the elimination of wars of aggression, it would be impossible to exercise human rights and fundamental freedoms fully, since they could be enjoyed only in an atmosphere of peace and mutual understanding and respect.

27. Granting, ensuring respect for and guaranteeing those rights and freedoms was the exclusive responsibility of sovereign States. The results of co-operation between States in that respect had been positive only when that essential principle had been observed. The success of the Conference would therefore depend on the action taken to ensure respect for that principle. Consequently, instead of setting up supranational organizations to supervise the observance of human rights, it would be more constructive to examine the interdependence between the granting and respect of those rights and the social and economic development of each nation. During the Committee's discussion on the world social situation, it had been pointed out that the recognition of those rights and fundamental freedoms for the inhabitants of a country with an under-developed economy merely confirmed their right to die of hunger and suffer from disease and ignorance.

28. With regard to participation in the Conference, the criterion adopted for States seemed to be the old one which had been artificially established in order to bypass evident realities; her delegation deplored such discrimination by the United Nations and considered that participation should be open to all. With regard to participation by non-governmental organizations, it would not be realistic to disregard the contribution made by some of them to the promotion and dissemination of the ideals of justice and freedom; on the other hand, to allow participation by all those organizations—some of which engaged in activities that were, to say the least, doubtful and alien to the principles of human rights—would be contrary to the spirit of co-operation and understanding which should prevail; it was to be hoped that it would be possible to work out some realistic formula acceptable to all, on the basis of the preliminary ideas expressed by the Preparatory Committee.

29. Mr. HASHI (Somalia) said that the International Conference on Human Rights should concentrate mainly on the questions of racism and colonialism, the factors which did more than anything else to poison international relations.

30. The participation of non-governmental organizations in the Conference should be restricted to a minimum number whose legitimate interest in matters relating to human rights could not be questioned. They should also be selected with a view to the contribution they could be expected to make to the Conference

itself and to the implementation of the resolutions which the Conference might adopt.

31. His Government was considering how it could best contribute to the observance of the International Year for Human Rights. He noted that the precepts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were embodied in the Somali Constitution, and said that he hoped other States would follow that example.

32. Mr. FORSHELL (Sweden) said that the non-governmental organizations had done a great deal to further human rights and that, in recognition of that fact, they should be allowed to participate in the International Conference on Human Rights. Some delegations had expressed the view that a restrictive criterion should be applied in deciding which of those organizations should be invited to the Conference, and others had suggested that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations might be the appropriate body to make the selection.

33. By its resolution 1225 (XLII) the Economic and Social Council had decided that the criteria laid down in its resolution 288 B (X) for the admission of such organizations to consultative status did not tend to conform to the realities of contemporary experience and had requested that Committee to review the criteria governing their admission. For that reason the Committee in question had found it logical not to process any new applications for consultative status until the Economic and Social Council decided on the guidelines to be applied. In the opinion of his delegation, however, that did not affect the consultative status accorded by the Council thus far to 205 such organizations, to which the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations must give equal treatment; therefore, that Committee could not make any selection among them without prejudicing the contemplated review. The position would be different if it were a question only of screening applications for participation in the International Conference submitted by non-governmental organizations not at present in consultative status with the Council; in such a case, the Committee in question might be the most appropriate body to settle the matter, provided that it received clear instructions beforehand regarding the criteria to be applied. In that connexion, and in order not to prejudice its subsequent recommendations to the Council, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should be given considerable latitude in its treatment of such applications.

34. Mr. PAOLINI (France) said that his delegation was in favour of the provisional agenda for the International Conference on Human Rights proposed by the Preparatory Committee (A/6670 and Corr.1, annex II) and that the General Assembly should not debate it any further at the present stage. The question of how many committees and working groups the Conference should have should also be left to the Conference itself, in accordance with rule 45 of its rules of procedure.

35. There were some major questions that could easily be grouped together: questions of discrimination and apartheid, family matters (including the progress of women and questions relating to birth control), measures to ensure effective exercise of human

rights (including the creation of a post of High Commissioner for Human Rights), new problems of human rights arising out of scientific and technological progress and economic and social problems.

36. It was clearly essential that the greatest possible number of Member States should participate in the International Conference on Human Rights, which would be the first of its kind. It was also unthinkable that such a conference should be held without the participation of at least those organizations which were recognized as being in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and had demonstrated their interest in the question of human rights. Some delegations had suggested that the problem, which the Preparatory Committee had been unable to solve, should be referred to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council. He expressed reservations with regard to that suggestion; his country was a member of the Committee and knew what a heavy workload it had, for it was now confronted with the task of reviewing the criteria governing the admission of such organizations to consultative status. As the Swedish delegation had indicated, there would be objections of principle to any discrimination against non-governmental organizations in consultative status, particularly since the examination of new applications for consultative status had been suspended. Also, other international conferences were to be held in which the same question would arise and the workload of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should not be increased, for if it were that Committee might not be able to fulfil the task entrusted to it by the Council. If, therefore, neither the Third Committee nor the General Assembly could reach a definite decision on the matter his delegation would prefer to see it referred back to the Preparatory Committee, which was competent to settle it. That Committee's report (A/6670 and Corr.1, para. 79) stated that if the approximate number of non-governmental organizations that might wish to attend were known that would be of assistance in reaching a decision regarding the invitations that might be issued. He stressed, in conclusion, that he did not think it possible to deny the right to take part in the first international conference on human rights to the non-governmental organizations that participated regularly in the work of United Nations organs competent in that field.

37. Mr. HELDAL (Norway) noted with satisfaction that the Preparatory Committee had reached agreement on all points relating to the International Conference on Human Rights except that concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations, and he expressed the hope that the Committee would be able to establish a satisfactory procedure which would make it possible for those organizations to attend. His delegation shared the view expressed by various members of the Preparatory Committee that non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council had made an effective contribution to the work of the

United Nations in the field of human rights. To exclude those organizations from the Conference would be a regrettable and retrograde step. His delegation considered that a number of voluntary organizations could play a useful role at the Conference and also that they were, on the whole, well qualified to publicize the achievements of the Conference and make them more widely understood, which might be just as important as the actual results of the Conference. In the report of the Preparatory Committee (A/6670 and Corr.1, para 70) it was recommended that the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity and the Organization of American States should be invited to participate in the Conference. His delegation welcomed that recommendation, which was in conformity with Economic and Social Council resolution 1159 (XLI).

38. Some non-governmental organizations had for many years been carrying on extensive educational and informational activities in the field of human rights, and their participation in the Conference as observers would undoubtedly serve as a stimulus to them to continue those activities. An informed public was one of the prerequisites for universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Education and information should be among the fundamental concerns of the Conference and, in both fields, the non-governmental organizations could play a vital role.

39. He fully shared the satisfaction expressed by the Iranian representative at the 1533rd meeting with regard to the inclusion in the Conference's provisional agenda of item 11 (d) concerning women's rights in the modern world. He thought that if women's organizations and other non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were invited to send observers, their presence and the part they would play would considerably enhance the value of the Conference. Lastly, he wished to announce that a special committee had been set up in Norway to make preparations for the observance of the International Year for Human Rights and that it had drawn up, in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Association of Norway, a plan for information activities during the International Year.

40. Mr. TEKLE (Ethiopia) said that he hoped the International Conference on Human Rights would show that the human race had advanced and that that would be reflected in specific measures designed to further the exercise of and respect for human rights. The Ethiopian Government was planning to carry out various programmes concerning the International Year for Human Rights, which would include the wide dissemination of the Universal Declaration, the organization of conferences and seminars, the issuing of special stamps, and a special message to the nation by the Chief of State or the Prime Minister with reference to the International Year.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.