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Chairman:

Mr. SOMAVIA

(Chile)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 89: EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS INSTRUMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF BODIES ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SUCH INSTRUMENTS
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 93: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 97: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 105: INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 106: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 109: TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 110: ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRINCIPLE OF PERIODIC AND GENUINE ELECTIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 94: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS INSTRUMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF BODIES ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SUCH INSTRUMENTS (continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. A, A/45/205, 207, 216, 222, 227, 230, 234, 235, 264, 265, 266, 267, 269, 270, 272, 280, 636, 707, A/44/668, annex)

AGENDA ITEM 93: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS (continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. A, A/45/580)

AGENDA ITEM 97: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (continued) (A/45/202, 222, 265, 269, 473)

AGENDA ITEM 105: INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS (continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. A, A/45/40, 174, 178, 403, 497, 597, 598, 657; E/1990/23)

AGENDA ITEM 106: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE (continued) (A/45/205, 222, 225, 265, 270)

AGENDA ITEM 109: TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT (continued) (A/45/44 and Corr.1, 189, 205, 207, 216, 225, 227, 230, 254, 264, 266, 280, 405, 615, 633)

AGENDA ITEM 110: ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRINCIPLE OF PERIODIC AND GENUINE ELECTIONS (continued) (A/45/202, 203, 205, 207, 225, 227, 230, 254, 264, 265, 266, 267, 269, 270, 272, 280, 626)

1. Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia), referring to agenda item 89, said that the figure of 767 reports that Member States had failed to submit to the bodies monitoring implementation of international human rights treaties, mentioned in paragraph 12 of the report of the third meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies (A/45/66), was intolerably high and indicated inconsistent approaches by some Member States to compliance with their obligations under individual Covenants.

2. The situation was linked with the question of financial contributions to support the activities of those bodies. The General Assembly should give serious consideration to improving the situation, for example, by linking the activities of treaty bodies through the exchange of material and reports and possibly by the participation of officials in each other's meetings, which should not involve additional costs since meetings normally took place in New York or Geneva. Consideration might also be given to regular meetings between chairmen of the treaty bodies, although that might involve additional costs.

3. His delegation welcomed the measures already taken or being adopted to improve the operation of the treaty bodies, such as the production of the manual for the preparation of implementation reports, and was ready to consider other ideas such as improving advisory services, increasing publicity and using cost-referencing to prevent overlapping of work. It should be remembered that the international legal

(Mr. Slaby, Czechoslovakia)

instrument was the principal organ, the treaty body being responsible for monitoring compliance. It was through that process that the human rights situation throughout the world could, he hoped, be vastly improved.

4. In connection with agenda item 97, he noted that Czechoslovakia had signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child - which had entered into force with remarkable speed - and it was hoped that a proposal for ratification would be placed before Parliament shortly. The fact that the committee that was to monitor the implementation of the Convention was due to start work in 1991 was one more argument for the allocation of additional resources to the United Nations human rights programmes. As the President of Czechoslovakia had stated at the World Summit for Children, the Convention should prohibit parents and adults in general from lying, serving dictatorships, informing on others, betraying their friends and ideals on the pretext of acting in the interests of children.

5. Commenting on agenda item 105, he said that ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, together with the Declaration under article 41 of the Covenant, had been approved by the Government and submitted to Parliament. Czechoslovakia had submitted its third periodic report on the implementation of the Covenant but had had to cancel its presentation to the implementation committee because of the ongoing political and social changes in Czechoslovakia and it hoped to present a new report in the first half of 1991. It had been impossible to meet the deadline of 17 November 1990 set by the Centre for Human Rights because new legislation had not yet been completed. Czechoslovakia would also shortly be signing the European Convention on Human Rights.

6. With respect to agenda item 106, it was true that prior to 1989, Czechoslovakia's attitude towards religious freedom had left much to be desired. For example, religious activity was subject to State approval and the State had systematically curtailed such activity. Provisions under the Penal Code had restricted services by preachers, prohibited religious wedding ceremonies unless preceded by a civil marriage and denied exemption from military service on grounds of religious belief. The laws had now been amended to abolish those restrictive practices and also to provide for the participation of Church representatives in criminal proceedings and in the rehabilitation of convicted persons. Those were temporary measures, however, pending the adoption of new laws, once the new Constitution of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and the Constitutions of the two national republics had been adopted. Meanwhile, the legal code would fully observe the norms laid down in the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief.

7. A similar situation existed in the case of agenda item 109. Czechoslovakia's report to the fifth session of the Committee against Torture, due to be held later in the month, had been withdrawn and a new one would be submitted by the end of June 1991.

(Mr. Slaby, Czechoslovakia)

8. With regard to the violation of international obligations by the encroachment of the Czechoslovak security forces on Národní Street in Prague on 17 November 1989, the former State leadership bore full responsibility. The liability of former officials involved was still under investigation by a Parliamentary Commission and some people were now being prosecuted or had already been sentenced. The Commission was also trying to establish the political responsibility of those who had made the decision to use force or participated in the preparation and execution of the encroachment.

9. With regard to agenda item 110, he said that Czechoslovakia regarded observance of the important principle of free and genuine elections as an essential condition for the construction of a democratic society. The successful parliamentary elections held in June, the first for 40 years, had helped to improve his country's image and the forthcoming communal elections would complete the establishment of a democratic electoral system. However, despite the success of the elections, the various stages of the electoral process had not been without difficulties and Czechoslovakia therefore supported the call for the United Nations to provide assistance in the organization and monitoring of elections, particularly bearing in mind the success achieved in Nicaragua and Namibia.

10. Ms. ILIC (Yugoslavia) said that her delegation noted with satisfaction the growing number of States parties to the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols. It was pleased to note the comments of the Human Rights Committee concerning the non-discrimination provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the different concepts of the family in various States. It was also gratified to see that the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had further improved its working methods and had replaced its sectional reports by a unified global report, and that the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/45 had welcomed the Committee's comment on the role of human rights in development and the means by which United Nations Development Agencies should integrate measures to promote respect for human rights into their activities. The system of general comments by the Treaty bodies should be further encouraged. She also welcomed the progress made by the Committee against Torture, despite financial difficulties.

11. Her delegation shared the view expressed by the Director, Implementation of International Instruments and Procedures Branch of the Centre for Human Rights, that the international human rights treaty system was the core of the United Nations work in the human rights field and that its role increased in importance with the number of ratifications and the adoption and entry into force of new instruments. Her delegation was pleased to note that progress had been made in following a number of important recommendations resulting from General Assembly initiatives and meetings of persons chairing the treaty bodies, such as the adoption of reporting guidelines for States parties and the completion of the manual on reporting prepared under the aegis of UNITAR in co-operation with the Centre for Human Rights, as well as the completion of the work of the task force on computerization. Her delegation supported the recommendations and conclusions of

(Ms. Ilic, Yugoslavia)

the third meeting of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, aimed at streamlining, rationalizing and otherwise improving reporting procedures.

12. Yugoslavia especially welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and urged its speedy and universal ratification in view of the precarious situation of children, particularly in the developing countries. It was high time to take effective steps towards removing the major obstacles to more rapid social and economic development of the developing countries. Those obstacles impaired standards of living, especially in respect of food, social and health service for children and mothers and prospects for education, training and participation in cultural life. Every effort must be made to resolve the problems of children everywhere and to protect them from the dangers of drug abuse, an unhealthy environment and AIDS.

13. The World Summit for Children, in which the President of her country had played an active part, had been another turning point: it had provided a framework for the all-round development of children. The rights of the child had now become an inalienable component of the social and spiritual life of all nations and an urgent obligation of all States. The international community also had a moral obligation to deal with the developing countries' serious economic problems far more resolutely and purposefully; otherwise there could be no genuine solution to the problem of child development in those countries.

14. Her delegation noted with satisfaction that the World Summit for Children had entrusted the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with the task of preparing a consolidated analysis of the plans and actions undertaken by individual countries and the international community in support of the child-related development goals for the 1990s, and that the General Assembly would be kept informed of progress and additional action through a periodic review by the governing bodies of the relevant specialized agencies and United Nations organs of the implementation of the Declaration and the Plan of Action of the World Summit.

15. Yugoslavia was in process of ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention had already been translated and widely distributed, measures had been taken to adjust legislation accordingly, round-table discussions had been organized and some children had been polled to ascertain their views on the Convention and the rights it established.

16. Mrs. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that recent experience had confirmed the importance of human rights questions in the overall context of international co-operation. The era of confrontation and ideological contests was ending. There was a growing awareness in the international community that dictatorship, totalitarianism and closed societies were incompatible with the concept of a civilized society in which the value of the individual was respected. Although countries had different approaches to human rights depending on their history, culture and traditions, the unifying factor was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other international human rights instruments. The Organization therefore should do everything to promote the universal acceptance and observance of the principles set forth in those documents.

(Mrs. Arystanbekova, USSR)

17. Her delegation noted with satisfaction that in recent years a number of important human rights instruments had been adopted, including the Convention against Torture, the Declaration on the Right to Development and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The draft convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and their families was sufficiently balanced and duly reflected the interests of all States. Her Government welcomed the progress made in drawing up documents on the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples and hoped that it would be possible to complete the drafting of a declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms and the set of principles on protection of the rights of the mentally ill. It might also be time to consider ways to strengthen norms relating to freedom of conscience and alternatives to military service.

18. Her delegation attached importance to the implementation of the principle of periodic and genuine elections as an important condition for ensuring the rights and freedoms of the individual. It was hoped that a consensus could be reached on that question through dialogue between delegations.

19. The monitoring committees established under the international conventions had a key role to play in the implementation of those instruments. In that connection, her delegation stressed the need for the timely submission of periodic implementation reports. Application of the recommendations put forward by the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies contained in the annex to document A/45/636 would also considerably enhance the effectiveness of the committees concerned and the entire United Nations human rights structure. A system of international monitoring was necessary to improve the observance of human rights in all countries by bringing domestic legislation into line with international norms and encouraging States to review their procedures and practices.

20. The prevention of human rights violations was also an important task, requiring objective data on the situation in all countries and mutually acceptable methods of preventive action. To that end, the activities of United Nations human rights bodies should be co-ordinated and improved and the independent status of experts serving on international bodies should be strengthened.

21. Confidence-building measures were also a promising area of co-operation in the field of human rights. Such measures could initially consist of voluntary unilateral steps by States to permit non-governmental delegations to monitor elections and observe judicial procedures. Objective international monitoring did not constitute interference in the internal affairs of States and could become an important factor in achieving the objectives pursued by the international community.

22. The Soviet Union was endeavouring to enhance its participation in the international human rights monitoring procedure as part of its long-term strategy to bring about far-reaching changes in Soviet society. That process of democratization was based on respect for the basic rights and freedoms of the individual. The Soviet legislative reform was gaining momentum and a multi-party

(Mrs. Arystanbekova, USSR)

system had already been established. A law guaranteeing freedom of the press had been enacted in August 1990, abolishing censorship and guaranteeing access to information. In October, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had adopted a law on freedom of conscience and religious associations, which complied with international norms.

23. A world conference on human rights could be a milestone in promoting international co-operation in humanitarian activities and should deal with specific ways to improve United Nations initiatives in that regard. It should focus on strengthening the existing international legal basis and be carefully prepared so as to make the most effective use of limited resources. The Soviet Union considered United Nations human rights programmes a matter of priority and supported proposals to allocate additional financial resources to strengthen the competent Secretariat bodies, particularly the Centre for Human Rights. Her delegation hoped that the discussion of humanitarian questions would promote the universal observance of human rights and was prepared to co-operate with all States to achieve that goal.

24. Mr. AL-HAMAMI (Yemen) said that the two main objectives of free and fair elections were to ensure the participation of citizens in the political process and to make political representatives answerable to their electorate. The Constitution of the newly unified Yemeni State stipulated that representatives to the national assembly should be elected by a secret, free and direct public ballot. The right to vote and stand for election was guaranteed to all Yemeni citizens, as were the principles of freedom of opinion and expression and equality before the law.

25. It was therefore all the more regrettable to see Yemeni citizens in neighbouring States unjustly subjected to various forms of torture and inhuman practices solely by reason of their nationality.

26. That circumstance called to mind the long-standing tragedy of their Palestinian brothers, against whom the Israeli occupation forces used various modern methods of torture and for whom eviction, deportation and killing were daily events chronicled by the world media. International public opinion was urged to put an end to that tragic situation. The Swedish Save the Children Fund, in a praiseworthy January 1990 report on the situation of Palestinian children in the occupied territories, had given details of the torture and inhuman treatment of those innocent human beings. His delegation had high hopes that implementation of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, which had been signed at the recent World Summit for Children, would ensure that the children of the intifadah and other suffering children enjoyed the same good health, well-being and attention as other children.

27. Mrs. KABA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that although the family provided the natural framework for the development of children, the international community still had a role to play in that connection, and it had been for that reason that UNICEF had been created. Other important landmarks in United Nations action in favour of children included the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted in 1959, the

(Mrs. Kaba, Côte d'Ivoire)

Proclamation of the International Year of the Child in 1979, the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child under General Assembly resolution 44/25 and the entry into force of that Convention on 2 September 1990.

28. Children's rights were based on the right to life, protection and development and to participate in decisions which related to them. In connection with the right of children to life, she told of an incident which had occurred at the OAU Summit at Addis Ababa in 1988, when the Director-General of UNICEF had introduced a small girl to the African Heads of State and Government. When asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, she had replied, "I want to be alive". Her only ambition was to survive, and there were millions of other children like her in the world, where 28 children under 5 years old, 27 of them from developing countries, died every minute of every day. Two thirds of those deaths were due to four diseases - diarrhoea, measles, tetanus and respiratory infections.

29. In order to cut the infant mortality rate in half, an additional annual investment of \$US 2.5 billion was needed - an insignificant amount equivalent to what was spent on weapons throughout the world in a single day. In the developing countries, 100 million children were threatened with famine and malnutrition, and, according to UNICEF estimates, another 2.5 million children in Africa would die of AIDS by the year 2,000.

30. Her delegation welcomed the Bamako Initiative adopted by the African Ministers of Health in 1987 to meet the need for primary health care in rural areas and felt that it should be upheld and encouraged by the international community. African Governments were paying an increasing amount of attention to the problems relating to children and, at the most recent OAU Summit, had adopted an African charter for child rights and welfare and a number of resolutions relating to children and had proclaimed the Decade of the African Child. The participation of a large number of African Governments in the World Summit for Children spoke eloquently of their concern in that regard. Although it was necessary to ensure that children enjoyed the right to life, there was little point in saving them from death only to give them over to a life of poverty and ignorance, in which they were exploited and treated with indifference. Fifty per cent of all African children lived in absolute poverty. Special action was called for from humanitarian bodies and NGOs to ensure that they were protected against life-threatening situations. Special attention was also required in the case of orphans.

31. At the World Conference on Education for All held in Thailand in March 1990, literacy programmes had been proposed as one way of ensuring the development of society. There were at present 100 million children of school age, including 600 million girls in the world, who had never set foot in a school and had thus been deprived of all prospects for decent employment and hence for a bright future for their own children. In order to end the vicious cycle of poverty, \$US 50 billion needed to be invested in primary education programmes during the 1990s. That challenge could be met by putting an end to the transfer of resources from the South to the North.

(Mrs. Kaba, Côte d'Ivoire)

32. The well-being of children depended not only on good health and a sound education but also on a stable social and family environment, in which children could receive support and guidance and could assimilate the moral and spiritual values of the community.

33. Miss BACH-TOBJI (Tunisia) said that the United Nations, exercising the moral authority conferred on it by its Charter, had served as an appropriate framework for the codification of humanitarian law, which was reflected in the municipal legislation of States. Some international human rights instruments were particularly important in that they made provision for machinery to supervise the exercise of the rights to which they referred and that machinery had demonstrated its usefulness and effectiveness. In that connection, her delegation wished to pay a special tribute to the Human Rights Committee for the spirit of co-operation it had displayed in its examination of Tunisia's third periodic report on the application of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to reiterate the intention of the Government of Tunisia to continue making improvements in certain areas where a number of obstacles stood in the way of the realization of human rights.

34. The bodies responsible for supervising the implementation of the instruments relating to human rights were facing serious problems relating to the rationalization of their work, and the recent institution of meetings of their Chairmen had provided a good solution to some of those difficulties. In that regard, she said her delegation felt there was a vital need to encourage the exchange of experience acquired within each of those organs, whose very survival, particularly in the case of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, was threatened by a shortage of financial resources. The General Assembly had envisaged measures to remedy that situation, such as the creation of an emergency fund for temporary financial relief, but it had become urgent to give priority to the adoption of such measures if the bodies concerned were to continue to function. It was vital to review the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in the light of the possibility of financing CERD out of the regular United Nations budget.

35. With regard to agenda item 109, she noted that the Government of Tunisia had submitted its first report under the Convention Against Torture in April 1990 and had decided to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture to demonstrate its determination to banish all forms of torture and inhuman treatment, especially those practised against children imprisoned in South Africa. Such practices would continue until such time as the odious and barbarous system of apartheid was abolished. Tunisia also condemned the massacres and torture carried out against Palestinians, including children, in the Israeli-occupied territories. It was time to put an end to the nightmare conditions in which those people lived and to restore their right to life and to an independent State. That goal could be realized only within the framework of an international peace conference attended by all the parties concerned.

36. Mr. BAMSEY (Australia) stressed the importance for Governments of the two international Covenants reflecting on the content and the practical measures needed to implement them. There had long been an unproductive debate over the relative priority of the two sets of rights they embodied, which represented two different but complementary approaches.

37. The remarkable changes which had taken place in various parts of the world in recent years gave practical expression to long-repressed aspirations for individual freedom and a democratic order, on the one hand, and for improved standards of living, on the other. Those aspirations were reflected in the two Covenants, whose complementarity was apparent from their common preambular paragraphs.

38. The dignity of the individual depended not only on guarantees against arbitrary action by the State, but also on his or her enjoyment of such rights as adequate food, clothing, housing and education. One difference between the two sets of rights was that the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights required States parties to take an active role in helping to bring about the achievement of the rights to which it subscribed, whereas many civil and political rights required the State to respect them by not doing anything to violate or infringe individual freedoms. He pointed out that efforts to achieve economic, social and cultural rights overlapped with efforts to realize the right to development and that in paragraph 145 of the report on the Global Consultation on the Right to Development as a Human Right (E/CN.4/1990/9/Rev.1), it was made clear that civil and political rights and the right to development were also complementary. Those whose civil liberties were suppressed could not participate in the process of development. His delegation therefore could not accept the assertion that one set of rights took precedence over or was conditional on achievement of another set of rights and believed it was far more productive to consider practical means of realizing all the human rights embodied in the major United Nations instruments. By the same token, it did not believe that it was legitimate to use the shortcomings of collective international co-operation as a pretext for suppressing basic freedoms. Action must be taken on all fronts simultaneously.

39. At its forty-fourth session, the General Assembly had adopted two important new instruments in the field of human rights. His delegation was particularly pleased at the rapidity with which the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Australia had helped to draft, had entered into force and believed that it would provide increased protection to generations of children and young people. Australia had signed the Convention, and it was currently in the process of ratification. In accordance with its view that the death penalty violated the right to life, Australia also welcomed the adoption of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

40. The question of religious intolerance was an important issue for Australia. It was disturbed by continuing religious intolerance in various parts of the world and supported the work of the Special Rapporteur as well as the efforts being made to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations

(Mr. Bamsey, Australia)

in matters relating to freedom of religion and belief. It endorsed the suggestion made by the delegation of Ireland that, to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on Religious Intolerance, Governments should consider steps at the national and regional levels to ensure that it was implemented more effectively.

41. With regard to torture, he said that no State was immune from the arbitrary misuse of power by its officials and urged States which had not yet signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention against Torture to consider doing so as a matter of priority. His delegation also commended the work of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on questions relating to torture and supported his view that the root causes of the use of torture must be attacked. It also supported the aims of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. Australia has been an active participant in the working group drafting a body of principles and guarantees for the protection of mentally ill persons, and regarded the instrument which had emerged as a practical initiative of immediate value. It looked forward to its early adoption.

42. Speaking on behalf of the delegation of New Zealand as well as his own delegation, he expressed the deep concern of their Governments over the failure of the authorities in Myanmar to make any serious move towards the transfer of power to a civilian Government in accordance with the express wishes of the people of that country. That refusal was especially disturbing at a time when many countries were gradually instituting truly democratic systems of Government, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

43. Mr. PICKERING (United States of America) said that United Nations efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections were based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Recent experience in Namibia and Nicaragua had shown that United Nations support for elections could be instrumental in resolving a broad range of difficult situations. Consideration should be given to developing a United Nations capacity to respond to needs for electoral assistance in a coherent, structured and rapid manner.

44. His country understood that political and social ideals were often implemented slowly and with much travail and it respected the right of States to establish different political systems within their constitutional and political frameworks. Since there was no single political system that suited all nations, it was the duty of all the members of the international community to respect decisions taken by States in freely choosing and developing their electoral institutions.

45. The electoral process created an enduring bond between the governed and those who exercised authority in the people's name. It provided a means of catharsis, healing and civic rededication, enabling all the people to participate in redirecting their lives. The United Nations should strengthen its capacity to make electoral services available upon request and with full respect for the sovereignty of Member States. The Organization could provide technical assistance to improve election procedures and offer electoral services as part of ongoing efforts to maintain international peace and security.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

46. He suggested that the Secretary-General should implement the proposal put forward by President Bush during the general debate in the plenary that the United Nations should establish a special co-ordinator for electoral assistance to be assisted by an electoral commission of distinguished experts from around the world to meet the growing number of requests by States. Having demonstrated its effectiveness on an ad hoc basis in Namibia and Nicaragua, the United Nations should proceed to regularize and codify its accumulated knowledge to enable it to respond effectively and systematically to future requests.

47. The electoral commission of distinguished experts could be composed essentially of a roster of distinguished individuals who would act as the Secretary-General's special representatives during United Nations missions providing electoral assistance. With regard to organization and management, agreement could be reached on an administrative approach that would make electoral assistance available on a case-by-case basis and a prudent and frugal approach should be maintained towards expenses of a general nature. Funding could be either on a voluntary basis or provided partially by regional organizations and by the Member State requesting the assistance.

48. Strengthening United Nations capacity in providing electoral assistance required careful thought and more time than was available during the General Assembly. He, therefore, recommended that the General Assembly should request the preparation of a report on alternative ways to administer United Nations electoral services for submission to the forty-sixth session. Such a measure would have the advantage of enabling the Organization to receive, sort and choose the best approaches, tailored to the desires of Member States. Furthermore, additional improvements would be based on practical experience. In respect of periodic and genuine elections, as in other matters of economic development, the key factors should be efficiency and flexibility.

49. Mr. CHADERTON MATOS (Venezuela), referring to agenda item 106, said that there was freedom of religion in his country. Denial of such freedom violated the fundamental canons of human freedom and dignity established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments, led to religious discrimination and could breed conflicts between States.

50. He thanked the Special Rapporteur for his report to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1990/46), which enumerated the persistent violations of human rights stemming from religious intolerance and the main stumbling blocks to the application of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. He felt that an international instrument on the subject would enhance the United Nations effectiveness in that field and constitute a renewed appeal to the international community to prevent religious intolerance, especially as the tenth anniversary of the Declaration was approaching. In drafting such an instrument, the points submitted by Mr. van Boven, a member of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/32) should especially be taken into account. The suggestion formulated at the third meeting of the persons chairing

(Mr. Chaderton Matos, Venezuela)

the human rights treaty bodies in December 1989 should also be borne in mind, namely that any new international instruments should be adopted in the form of protocols to already existing instruments.

51. In pursuance of one of the fundamental aims of the United Nations, encouragement and respect for human rights, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was making a vital contribution through its consideration of periodic reports of States on their implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and also in interpreting the scope and content of the provisions of those instruments. His delegation fully endorsed the general comments adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fundamental role that human rights should play in the development process and in particular, the recommendation that all United Nations development activities should ensure full respect for human rights.

52. While the Organization was being called upon to shoulder a heavier responsibility in supporting human rights activities through its monitoring agencies and the Centre for Human Rights, it was not being allocated the necessary financial resources. The Secretary-General's report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the subject attested to that fact (E/1990/50). He hoped that the proposals for the long-term solution to the Organization's financial and personnel needs in respect of human rights included in the programmes of the 1992-1993 biennium would receive broad support. At present, they were awaiting the Secretary-General's report on the provisional measures to be taken during the current biennium, to rectify the tight financial situation.

53. Venezuela had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child less than one year after its adoption. His delegation was gratified that the Convention had entered into force so quickly and Venezuela wished to be a member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child that would supervise its implementation. At the national level, Venezuela planned to convene a national conference on the child on the anniversary of the enactment by its legislature of the Act on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

54. The Venezuelan Government had placed children high on the list of social concerns and one of its immediate targets was to ensure that the necessary conditions were provided for the growth and intellectual development of children. Despite the country's economic difficulties, it was committed to carrying out a series of nutrition and education projects, to assist disadvantaged children and 42 per cent of its 1991 budget was earmarked for social programmes that would benefit children. The programmes would be continually reviewed by the national authorities to bring them into line, where necessary, with the Programme of Action recently adopted by the World Summit for Children.

55. His delegation was filled with revulsion at the torture and inhuman treatment of the children in detention in South Africa (A/45/615) and deplored the fact that

(Mr. Chaderton Matos, Venezuela)

the practice appeared to be so widespread under the apartheid system. He hoped that the international community would take effective and practical measures to address that situation and that it would not relax its vigilance despite the progress that had recently been achieved in South Africa.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.32 (Agenda item 94)

56. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) introduced amendments to the draft resolution (A/C.3/45/L.42) which would have the effect of adding two preambular paragraphs and one new operative paragraph. The object of the amendments was to recall and add important elements and principles which had been already adopted by the Third Committee. He wished also to include a small addition which had not been included in the original draft resolution and would serve to complete it, namely, inserting the words "and 43/124 of December 1988," at the end of the first preambular paragraph.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.