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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Fifty-fifth session  
Agenda item 21 (b)

REPORT TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ON THE  
FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

DRAFT REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

Rapporteur: Mr. Raouf CHATY

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\* Documents E/CN.4/1999/L.10 and addenda will contain the chapters of the report relating to the organization of the session and the various items on the agenda. Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission, as well as draft resolutions and decisions for action by, and other matters of concern to, the Economic and Social Council, will be contained in documents E/CN.4/1999/L.11 and addenda.

### III. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE SESSION

#### A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on Human Rights held its fifty-fifth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 22 March to 30 April 1999. It held 62 meetings (E/CN.4/1999/SR.1-62) 1/ during the session.

2. The session was opened by Mr. Jacob S. Selebi, Chairman of the Commission at its fifty-fourth session, who made a statement.

#### B. Attendance

3. The session was attended by representatives of States members of the Commission, by observers for other States Members of the United Nations, by observers for non-member States and by representatives of the specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations, national liberation movements and non-governmental organizations. An attendance list is given in annex I to the present report.

#### C. Election of officers

4. At its 1st meeting, on 22 March 1999, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairperson: Ms. Anne Anderson (Ireland)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Romans Baumanis (Latvia)

Mr. Luis Alberto Padilla Menéndez (Guatemala)

Mr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada (Nepal)

Rapporteur: Mr. Raouf Chatty (Tunisia)

#### D. Agenda

5. Also at its 1st meeting, the Commission had before it the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session (E/CN.4/1999/1 and Add.1 and Corr.1), drawn up, in accordance with rule 5 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, on the basis of the provisional agenda considered by the Commission at its fifty-fourth session in accordance with paragraph 3 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1894 (LVII).

6. The agenda was adopted without a vote. For the text, see annex II to the present report.

E. Organization of work

7. At its 2nd meeting, on 23 March 1999, the Commission considered the organization of its work.

8. For the documents issued under agenda item 3, see annex VI to the present report. For a list of all resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission and Chairman's statements, by agenda item, see annex V to the present report.

9. Also at its 2nd meeting, the Commission accepted the recommendation of its officers regarding limitation of the frequency and duration of statements. Members of the Commission were limited to one statement of 10 minutes or two statements of 5 minutes per item. Observers and non-governmental organizations were limited to one statement of 5 minutes per item. In case of joint statements by States and non-governmental organizations, more time, within reasonable limits, would be given to the speakers. If after a collective statement of States some of them wished to take the floor again under the same item, they would be given half the time normally accorded.

10. The Commission also accepted the recommendation that observer States and national liberation movements mentioned in reports submitted to the Commission were limited to one statement of 10 minutes under the item concerned. National commissions (institutions) on human rights were limited to one statement of 7 minutes. The introductions of draft consensus resolutions by a co-sponsor (if requested) were limited to 3 minutes. It was agreed that, with regard to rights of reply, a limitation to two replies, 3 minutes for the first and 2 minutes for the second, at the end of the day or at the end of the general debate on any particular item(s), would be observed.

11. It was also recommended that guest speakers should limit their statements to 15 minutes. Special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts and chairpersons of working groups should limit their initial statements to 10 minutes and their concluding remarks, if necessary, to 5 minutes.

12. At the same meeting, it was agreed that the list of speakers would be opened at the beginning of the session for all participants to be inscribed for all agenda items. There would be three separate lists, for members, observers and non-governmental organizations, and they would speak in that order. The closure of the list of speakers on any particular item(s) would be announced by the Chairperson in advance.

13. It was also agreed that draft resolutions and decisions, in order to respect editorial and other requirements, should be submitted at least three working days before the date on which they were scheduled to be considered. The deadline for the submission of draft resolutions would be set by the Chairman in consultation with the Bureau and announced sufficiently in advance.

14. It was further agreed that the Commission would dispense with the requirement of a quorum except for meetings at which a vote would be taken.

15. It was also recommended that the sessional open-ended working group to review and formulate proposals for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, under item 6, should hold four meetings during the first week of the session.

16. Also at its 2nd meeting, on the recommendation of its officers, the Commission decided to invite a number of experts, special rapporteurs, special representatives, chairpersons-rapporteurs of working groups and other persons to participate in the meetings at which their reports were to be considered.

17. For the text of the decision as adopted, see chapter II, section B, decision 1999/101.

18. At its 5th meeting, on 25 March 1999, the Commission approved the timetable for the consideration of agenda items as proposed by the Bureau.

19. In this connection, statements were made by the representatives of Austria, China, Cuba, Germany, India and Norway.

20. At the 6th meeting, on 26 March 1999, a statement was made by the Chairperson with respect to the handling of the report of the Bureau of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights submitted pursuant to Commission decision 1998/112 (E/CN.4/1999/104).

21. In this connection, statements were made by the representatives of Chile, Cuba, Germany, India, Mexico and Norway (on behalf of the Western Group).

22. In the general debate on agenda item 3, statements 2/ were made by the following members of the Commission: Argentina (4th), Austria (5th), Bangladesh (2nd), Bhutan (2nd), Canada (4th), Chile (4th, 6th), China (3rd, 5th), Cuba (2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th), Ecuador (5th), Germany (on behalf of the European Union) (4th, 5th, 6th), Guatemala (5th), India (also on behalf of Algeria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cuba, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines,

Sri Lanka, Sudan and Malaysia) (2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th), Indonesia (3rd), Ireland (5th), Italy (5th), Latvia (also on behalf of Armenia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Georgia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) (4th), Mexico (2nd, 6th), Norway (on behalf of the Western Group) (4th, 5th, 6th), Pakistan (also on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference) (2nd) (5th), Philippines (3rd), South Africa (4th), Sri Lanka (on behalf of the Asian Group) (2nd), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (4th), United States of America (4th), Uruguay (5th).

23. The Commission heard statements by the observers for Egypt (3rd) and Spain (7th).

Ruling by the Chairperson

24. At the 45th meeting, on 20 April 1999, the Chairperson made a statement concerning the right to raise points of order in the Commission. She stated, inter alia, the following:

"In accordance with the advice of the Legal Office in New York, which relies on resolution 52/250 of the General Assembly and the accompanying note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, my ruling is that the observer for Palestine has the right in this Commission to raise points of order relating to Palestinian and Middle East issues provided that the right to raise such a point of order shall not include the right to challenge a decision by the presiding officer.

"The second aspect of my ruling relates to the right of observer Governments generally to make a point of order. The matter at issue here is the interpretation to be given to rule 42.1 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

"I rule that for the purposes of article 42.1, the term 'a representative' is to be interpreted in the Commission on Human Rights as applying both to representatives of States Members of the United Nations not members of the Commission on Human Rights but participating in our work in an observer capacity."

25. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the United States of America.

Question of Kosovo

26. At the 25th meeting, on 9 April 1999, Ms. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, made a statement on the situation of human rights in Kosovo.

27. At the 39th meeting, on 16 April 1999, statements were made by Ms. Robinson and Mr. Dennis McNamara, Director of the Division of International Protection of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

28. At the 49th meeting, on 22 April 1999, a statement was made by Ms. Robinson.

Human rights in Central America in the context of reconstruction and rehabilitation after Hurricane Mitch

29. At the 38th meeting, on 16 April 1999, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Commission, made a statement concerning the human rights in Central America in the context of reconstruction and rehabilitation after Hurricane Mitch, which reads as follows:

"Chairperson's statement on human rights in Central America in the context of reconstruction and rehabilitation after Hurricane Mitch"

"The Commission on Human Rights acknowledges the significant progress achieved in the promotion and protection of human rights by the Central American region countries during the present decade, transforming it into a region of peace and democracy through dialogue, cooperation and political will.

"The Commission deeply regrets the loss of human lives as well as the loss of harvests, homes and basic infrastructure caused by Hurricane Mitch at the end of 1998. The hurricane is considered by the United Nations to be the worst natural disaster in the Americas in the whole of the twentieth century. In light of the magnitude of this catastrophe, the Commission expresses its solidarity with the entire Central American region, in particular Honduras and Nicaragua, which were the most affected countries, and El Salvador and Guatemala, which suffered significant damage. In the subregional context, it is important to note the serious losses suffered by the Dominican Republic as a result of Hurricane Georges in September of 1998.

"The Commission recognizes and commends the immediate and sustained response from Governments, non-governmental organizations and private voluntary organizations in providing relief during the emergency phase, as well as continued assistance provided up until now in the difficult task of reconstruction.

"Taking into account the close relationship between human rights and sustainable development, the Commission notes the impact of Hurricane Mitch on the enjoyment of human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights.

"The Commission recognizes that the impact of Hurricane Mitch negatively affects the development of the Central American region in all its forms, and it calls for a continuing joint and extraordinary effort by the countries of the region to preserve the progress achieved thus far and to accelerate their social and economic development.

"The Commission also recognizes that during the reconstruction and transformation phase, the countries of the region have a unique opportunity to strengthen the promotion and protection of all human rights, especially by providing improved social services, constructing better basic infrastructure, fortifying their democratic and judicial institutions, among others.

"The Commission is confident that the Central American democracies will be able to overcome the challenges posed by the effects of Hurricane Mitch and encourages the continued support of the international community in the reconstruction and transformation efforts, and expresses once again its solidarity with the countries and peoples of Central America."

Situation of human rights in Colombia

30. At the 38th meeting, on 16 April 1999, Ms. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, introduced her report on Colombia (E/CN.4/1999/8).

31. At the same meeting, statements 2/ were made by the following members of the Commission: Canada, Colombia, Germany (on behalf of the European Union; Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia associated themselves with the statement).

32. At the same meeting, the Commission also heard statements by the following non-governmental organizations: Agir ensemble pour les droits de l'homme, American Association of Jurists, Amnesty International, Andean Commission of Jurists, Canadian Council of Churches, Catholic Institute for International Relations, Federación de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, France-Libertés: Fondation Danielle Mitterrand, Franciscans International, Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, International League

for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, International Service for Human Rights, Pax Romana, Women's International Democratic Federation, World Organization against Torture.

33. At the 56th meeting, on 27 April 1999, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Commission, made the following statement concerning the situation of human rights in Colombia:

Chairman's statement on Colombia

"The Commission on Human Rights welcomes the fact that State and government institutions in Colombia have continued to cooperate with the permanent Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bogotá, enabling it to conduct its activities in Colombia. It also welcomes the analytical report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Office in Colombia (E/CN.4/1999/8). It also takes note of a document containing the observations of the Government of Colombia on that report (E/CN.4/1999/141, annex).

"The Commission welcomes the renewal of the agreement between the Government of Colombia and the High Commissioner for Human Rights extending the mandate of the permanent Office in Bogotá until 30 April 2000. It considers of greatest importance the work which the Office is undertaking in the promotion and protection of human rights, an element which may facilitate reconciliation between Colombians and the search for peace. The Commission continues to believe that the Office, which is mandated to promote and protect human rights and observe violations of human rights in the country, as well as to assist the Colombian authorities in developing policies and programmes, continues to perform a vital role in addressing ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Colombia. The Commission expects that the activities of the human rights Office in Bogotá will eventually contribute to a climate of trust between the Government and all sectors involved in the conflict, in particular by encouraging a process of constructive dialogue involving non-governmental organizations and other sectors of civil society.

"The Commission notes the continued willingness of the Government of Colombia to give full importance to the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the High Commissioner, but deplores the fact that its recommendations as well as those made by thematic mechanisms and other United Nations bodies, have not been fully implemented. The Commission



further concludes that continued strong cooperation with thematic rapporteurs and working groups is, inter alia, necessary to improve the situation of human rights in Colombia.

"The Commission acknowledges the steps taken by the Government of Colombia for the application of humanitarian standards in the conflict, and welcomes its continued cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the facilitation of its humanitarian activities in the country.

"In this context, the Commission deplores the grave and prolonged occurrence of serious and massive violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law.

"The Commission notes the introduction by the Government of Colombia in December 1998 of an integrated human rights strategy which is in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and which highlights respect for international humanitarian law and measures for combating impunity, professionalization of the armed forces, assistance for the internally displaced and the safety of human rights defenders as areas of concern. The Commission urges the Government of Colombia to complement these guidelines by introducing practical measures to address these problem areas, in particular the high level of impunity. It welcomes the declared readiness, as expressed in this Commission by the Vice-President of Colombia in his new capacity as Human Rights High Counsellor of the Government, to give the highest priority to the promotion and protection of human rights in the future, and to set in motion without delay the national human rights plan.

"The Commission expresses its hope that peace talks between the Government of Colombia and all the groups involved in the internal conflict will become permanent and provide a decisive impulse until a sustainable peace is reached in Colombia. The Commission remains deeply concerned about the lack of a ceasefire and about increasing grave abuses of international humanitarian law, mainly by 'paramilitaries' (also known as 'self-defence groups' or 'autodefensas') and guerrillas. At the same time, the Commission deplores violations of human rights by certain State agents and urges the Government of Colombia to take strong and decisive action against all State agents found guilty of human rights violations.

"The Commission remains deeply concerned about the increase in the number of internally displaced people in Colombia and calls for enhanced action by the Colombian authorities, in coordination with international bodies. In this context, it notes with satisfaction the cooperation established between the Government of Colombia and the liaison office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Bogotá on the basis of a memorandum of intent dated 28 January 1999. The Commission urges the Government of Colombia to seek effective means to eradicate the causes of displacement, in particular carrying out judicial investigations against 'paramilitary' groups as a main actor. It calls on the Government to provide for a publicly announced and well-funded strategy to solve the problems of internal displacement. It further calls for thorough investigations into crimes against the displaced population and urges the Government to take preventive measures in those areas where the population has been threatened with enforced displacement.

"The Commission welcomes the reduction in the number of human rights violations attributed to the armed and security forces and the police, but is concerned that the armed forces have not fulfilled their intention to suspend from active service all those in their ranks who are under formal juridical or disciplinary investigation for human rights violations until guilt or innocence is determined and to dismiss them where such allegations have been proven. It urges the Government of Colombia to institute criminal proceedings against all those so implicated. It urges the Government of Colombia to establish as soon as possible the necessary measures to guarantee a truly independent judicial system, to ensure the transfer of all judicial procedures concerning serious human rights violations currently under military penal jurisdiction to the jurisdiction of the ordinary justice system and to separate the functions of the executive and the judiciary. The Commission urges the Congress of Colombia to ensure that the Military Penal Code reform bill is approved at its ongoing session and urges the Government of Colombia to ensure that it is in full conformity with international law.

"The Commission regrets that the draft legislation on enforced disappearances was withdrawn from the agenda of an urgent session of the Congress in January 1999 and notes that it has been reintroduced. It reiterates to the Government of Colombia the importance of adopting a law criminalizing enforced disappearance. It calls upon the Congress of Colombia

to ensure its passage in the course of the ongoing session. It appeals to the Government to ensure that the law is in compliance with international instruments, in particular with the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and to adopt urgently penal and disciplinary regulations concerning enforced disappearances which punish them as serious crimes and offences and to adopt a criminal and legislative policy concerning violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in order to implement the recommendations of the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances and other thematic procedures.

"The Commission reiterates its concern at the continued violence by 'paramilitary' groups in Colombia. The Commission strongly condemns the crimes committed by 'paramilitary' groups, including those for which members of the 'special private security and vigilante services' (known as 'Convivir') have been proved responsible. It urges the Government of Colombia to intensify to the maximum political, administrative, judicial and other appropriate measures with respect to official bodies suspected of supporting 'paramilitary' groups, including legal proceedings against any State agent who cooperates with the 'paramilitaries', measures to dismantle the structure of and links between so-called 'Convivirs' and 'paramilitary' groups, and to bring their members to justice. The Commission urges the Government of Colombia to implement fully the decision to withdraw all licences for all 'Convivir' groups and to ensure that all weapons held by members of these groups are confiscated. Until they are disbanded, the Government is urged to provide public information on the number of such services in existence, their activities and the control measures taken by the Government.

"The Commission unequivocally condemns all acts of terrorism and all violations of international humanitarian law committed by guerrilla groups. It observes with the deepest concern that guerrilla activities continue to be directed against civilians (in particular the totally unacceptable practice of hostage-taking under the threat of death among nationals or foreigners who are neither personally involved in nor responsible for the conflict or its conduct) and attacks on infrastructure, including the bombing of pipelines, which have caused numerous deaths, great suffering amongst the civilian population and grave destruction. Gravely concerned by such recent outrages as the murder of three human rights defenders and mass abduction from an

aircraft, for which guerrilla groups were responsible, it calls on the guerrilla groups to respect norms of international humanitarian law, especially to refrain from killings and all attacks on the civilian population, indiscriminate massacres, hostage-taking and the widespread use of anti-personnel landmines, and to fulfil their own pledges not to recruit children. The Commission calls on the guerrilla groups to demonstrate that they are sincere about peace and to engage in serious and direct peace negotiations with the Government, showing the same readiness for compromise the Government has demonstrated so far.

"The Commission recognizes the important legislative steps taken in Colombia, among them the ratification of the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture and the rules which regulate the recruitment of those under 18 to compulsory military service. The Commission recognizes that a draft law has been presented to Congress to bring forward the abolition of the regional justice system. It urges early agreement in the Congress of Colombia and effective implementation of the laws mentioned above. The Commission appeals to the Congress of Colombia to ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction as soon as possible.

"The Commission deplores the continued existence of high rates of judicial impunity in cases of serious crimes, in particular the failure in some cases to arrive at early and effective conclusions to penal processes. It calls upon the Procurator-General to bring to trial without any delay all cases of serious allegations. It welcomes important advances made in a number of cases of gross human rights violations by the human rights unit in the Office of the Procurator-General which is investigating and indicting State agents, guerrillas and members of 'paramilitary' groups responsible for violations of human rights or international humanitarian law. At the same time, it remains concerned about the ongoing implication of State agents, as proven by the Office of the Procurator-General on numerous occasions. It calls on the Government of Colombia to continue to take steps to address this problem as a matter of urgency and to take action against the people concerned.

"The Commission expresses its profound concern over the grave situation of attacks against human rights defenders and deplores the lack of effective judicial investigations into such crimes as well as the absence of effective legal, administrative, security and financial measures to protect those social and human rights defenders who find themselves at risk. It urges the Government of Colombia to observe the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ('Declaration on Human Rights Defenders') adopted by the General Assembly. It calls upon the Government of Colombia to consolidate its support, through all institutions of the State, of all those who promote the defence of human rights and, in particular, to implement the presidential directive on recognition of the work of human rights advocates adopted in 1997 and other measures taken by the Government to improve this situation and to protect organizations of human rights defenders effectively. It encourages the authorities in Colombia to establish a permanent dialogue with non-governmental organizations, social and Church organizations with a view to enhance the protection of human rights defenders.

"The Commission calls upon the Government of Colombia to give the highest priority to developing concrete measures to integrate human rights education into the curricula of schools and universities throughout the country.

"The Commission notes with great concern the effects of violence on the indigenous population and calls upon the Government of Colombia to take effective steps for the improvement of their legal and physical protection.

"The Commission requests the High Commissioner for Human Rights to submit to it at its next session a detailed report on the activities of the Office, containing an analysis by the Office in Bogotá of the situation of human rights in Colombia, in accordance with the provisions of the agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the operation of the permanent Office in Bogotá."

Situation around the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

34. At the 50th meeting, on 23 April 1999, the representative of the Russian Federation introduced draft resolution E/CN.4/1999/L.2/Rev.1, sponsored by the Russian Federation.

35. Statements in explanation of vote before the vote were made by the representatives of Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, Germany (on behalf of the European Union and Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia), Guatemala, Pakistan (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference), Peru, the Sudan, Uruguay and Venezuela.

36. The representative of the United States of America requested a vote. At the request of the representative of the Russian Federation, a roll-call vote was taken on the draft resolution, which read as follows:

"Situation around the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

"The Commission on Human Rights,

"Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Protocols Additional thereto of 1977, and other instruments of international humanitarian law,

"Recalling, inter alia, article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which affirm that everyone has the right to life,

"Recalling also General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974 adopting the Definition of Aggression,

"Mindful of the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security,

"Taking note of the Declaration of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement of 9 April 1999,

"Concerned at reports of increasing numbers of victims and casualties amongst the civilian population and the destruction of installations and infrastructure used by civilians as a result of missile strikes and bombings,

"Alarmed at the rise in numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees resulting from the spread of the conflict,

"1. Calls urgently for an immediate cessation of all hostilities and violations of human rights, primarily the right to life, in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

"2. Reaffirms the responsibility of all parties to the conflict to seek and find peaceful solutions through negotiations while maintaining the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

"3. Resolutely condemns all violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, whomever they are perpetrated by;

"4. Reaffirms that all who commit, sanction or abet violations of international humanitarian law bear personal responsibility and are liable to punishment for these violations, and must be brought to trial."

37. The draft resolution was rejected by 24 votes to 11, with 18 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Mexico, Peru, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Against: Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Czech Republic, El Salvador, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Luxembourg, Morocco, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Senegal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Argentina, Bhutan, Botswana, Cape Verde, Chile, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nepal, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Tunisia.

38. Statements in explanation of vote after the vote were made by the representatives of Nepal and South Africa.

F. Meetings, resolutions and documentation

39. As indicated in paragraph 1 above, the Commission held 61 fully serviced meetings, including 13 additional meetings, authorized by Economic and Social Council decision 1996/295 of 24 July 1996.

40. The resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission at its fifty-fifth session are contained in chapter II of the present report. Draft resolutions and decisions for action by the Economic and Social Council are set out in chapter I. For a list of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission and Chairman's statements, by agenda item, see annex V to the present report.

41. Annex III contains a detailed list of speakers in the general debate on agenda items 3 to 20.
42. Annex IV contains a statement regarding the administrative and programme budget implications of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission at its fifty-fifth session.
43. Annex VI contains a list of documents issued for the fifty-fifth session of the Commission.

G. Visits

44. During its fifty-fifth session, the Commission heard statements 1/ by the following guest speakers:
- (a) At the 1st meeting, on 22 March 1999: Ms. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;
- (b) At the 2nd meeting, on 23 March 1999: Mr. Ural Latypov, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus; Mr. Joschka Fischer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany (on behalf of the European Union, and Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia aligned themselves with the statement); Mr. Mate Granic, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia; Mr. Bronislaw Geremek, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland; Mr. Martin Palous, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic; Mr. José Ayala Lasso, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador; Mr. Jean Martin Mbemba, Minister for Justice of the Republic of the Congo;
- (c) At the 3rd meeting, on 23 March 1999: Mr. Abdul Kader Abdul Rahman Bajamal, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen;
- (d) At the 4th meeting, on 24 March 1999: Ms. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; Ms. Carmen Moreno del Cueto, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico; Mr. Pierre-Claver Zeng-Ebome, Minister for Human Rights and Relations with the Constitutional Institutions of Gabon; Ms. Liz O'Donnell, Minister of State with special responsibility for Overseas Development Assistance and Human Rights of Ireland; Mr. Carlos Lage Dávila, Vice-President of the Council of State and Secretary of the Council of Ministers of Cuba;
- (e) At the 5th meeting, on 25 March 1999: Ms. Frances Rodrigues, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique; Mr. Soon-Young Hong, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, in connection with whose statement a statement in exercise of the



equivalent of the right of reply was made by the Observer for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Mr. Abdool Razack Peeroo, Attorney-General, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Corporate Affairs and Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations of Mauritius; Mr. Abderrahim Zouari, Minister of Education of Tunisia;

(f) At the 6th meeting, on 26 March 1999: Ms. Patrizia Toia, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy; Mr. Charles Josselin, Minister Delegate for Cooperation and Francophonie of France, in connection with whose statement a statement in exercise of the right of reply was made by the representative of the Russian Federation; Ms. Tarja Halonen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland; Ms. Hilde Frafjord Johnson, Minister of International Development and Human Rights of Norway;

(g) At the 8th meeting, on 30 March 1999: Mr. Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni, Minister of State in charge of External Relations of Cameroon (statement read by Mr. Samuel Mvondo Ayolo, Director of United Nations Affairs at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon); Mr. Ignatius C. Olisemeka, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria;

(h) At the 11th meeting, on 31 March 1999: Ms. Anna Lindh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, in connection with whose statement a statement in exercise of the equivalent of the right of reply was made by the Observer for Turkey (12th), followed by a statement in exercise of the right of reply by the Observer for Sweden (12th); Mr. Derek Fatchett, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

(i) At the 13th meeting, on 1 April 1999: Ms. Lydie Err, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, External Trade and Cooperation of Luxembourg; Mr. Vasily Sredine, Deputy-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, in connection with whose statement a statement in exercise of the equivalent of the right of reply was made by the representative of Latvia (21st); Mr. Eugène Nindorera, Minister for Human Rights of Burundi;

(j) At the 14th meeting, on 1 April 1999: Mr. Pierre-Henri Imbert, Director of Human Rights of the Council of Europe;

(k) At the 19th meeting, on 7 April 1999: Mr. Ali Muhamad Osman Yasin, Minister for Justice and Attorney-General of the Sudan; Mr. Azeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, in

connection with whose statement a statement in exercise of the right of reply was made by the representative of India (20th), followed by a statement in exercise of the right of reply by the representative of Pakistan (20th); Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations;

(l) At the 20th meeting, on 7 April 1999: Mr. Léonard She Okitumdu, Minister for Human Rights of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in connection with whose statement statements in exercise of the equivalent of the right of reply were made by the observers for Burundi (21st) and Rwanda (21st);

(m) At the 21st meeting, on 8 April 1999: Mr. Mohamed Auajjar, Minister for Human Rights of Morocco; Mr. Zéphirin Diabré, Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme;

(n) At the 27th meeting, on 12 April 1999: Mr. Jacques Baudin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal;

(o) At the 34th meeting, on 15 April 1999: Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS; Mr. Gustavo Bell Lemus, Vice-President of Colombia;

(p) At the 41st meeting, on 19 April 1999: Mr. Harry Olympio, Minister for the Promotion of Democracy and the Rule of Law of Togo;

(q) At the 42nd meeting, on 19 April 1999: Ms. Melba Pría, Director-General of the National Institute for Indigenous Affairs of Mexico;

(r) A statement in exercise of the right of reply was made by the representative of Cuba (6th).

#### H. Other matters

45. At its 44th meeting, on 20 April 1999, the Commission observed a minute of silence in memory of human rights defenders who had lost their lives for the cause of human rights.

#### I. Organization of the work of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission

46. At the 60th meeting, on 28 April 1999, the Chairman orally proposed a draft decision concerning the organization of the work of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission (dates of the session).

47. The draft decision was adopted without a vote. For the text of the decision as adopted, see chapter II, section B, decision 1999/112.

48. At the 60th meeting, on 28 April 1999, the Chairman orally proposed a draft decision concerning the organization of the work of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission (additional meetings).

49. The draft decision was adopted without a vote. For the text of the decision as adopted, see chapter II, section A, resolution 1999/113.

J. Concluding remarks

50. At the 62nd meeting, on 30 April 1999, concluding remarks were made by the following speakers:

**[To be completed pending final debate on the item]**

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