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at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 78: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (continued)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (c) NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING THE REPORT OF THE
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND
CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 75: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES
AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES; REPORTS
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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

AGENDA ITEM 78: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued)

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (continued) (A/42/21)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/494)

(c) NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (continued) (A/42/571)

1. Mrs. SEVIGNY (Under-Secretary-General for Public Information)* said that she had listened very carefully in the last five days to the statements made in the Committee and appreciated the expressions of support from Member States for the revitalization of the public information programme of the United Nations. Her sole objective in the effort to strengthen that programme was to be able to perform the tasks of the Department of Public Information (DPI) much more effectively and in the most efficient manner. The aim of the DPI reorganization plan was to create focal points, establish co-ordination in the programming, production and distribution of its information materials and extend the outreach of the United Nations to all corners of the world. As she had reiterated a number of times in the past few months to the Committee on Information, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Special Political Committee, it was for Member States to decide on the priorities and DPI, as part of the Secretariat, to implement the programmes as best it could, within the limit of its financial resources. She was gratified that that point was now generally accepted and hoped that DPI would be given sufficient time to prove that it could attain that objective.

2. She was proud of the many and diverse talents which DPI staff had exhibited in carrying out their responsibilities. In recent months, the Department had been able to take a more active approach in several projects. For example, in television the new short piece UN In Action was seen three minutes a week in almost 100 countries, directly or through the CNN report broadcast. Advances like the electronic press release, press kits with charts, graphs and other visual material, reprintable material prepared especially for non-governmental organizations, advance kits for special events, contacting specialized press outside the United Nations political press corps, urging in a systematic way heads of State or Government to issue statements as had been done for United Nations Day, were the kind of projects which would become the rule in the future.

3. Responding to specific questions raised by Member States, she said that one important issue referred to, for example, by the representatives of Brazil, Guyana,

* This statement has been given full coverage in the summary record in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee during the meeting.

(Mrs. Seigny)

Lesotho and Pakistan, among others, concerned the future of the regional radio programmes. She was committed to ensuring the continuation of regional radio programmes. The main thrust of the restructuring of DPI was to enable it to adopt a co-ordinated multi-media approach, so that the United Nations information programme could become more effective. That would ensure better co-ordination between divisions within the Department as well as with other substantive departments and programmes in the system. The radio programmes had to be synchronized with the other programmes in terms of content and delivery in order to ensure maximum impact. The representatives of Brazil and Pakistan respectively had raised the question of Portuguese and Urdu programmes. DPI intended to reach as wide an audience in the world as possible, and that had to be done by using a wide a variety of means to communicate with them, including local adaptations, whenever possible, of United Nations programmes. The way that would be done, however, would have to be worked out in the next phase of the restructuring process of DPI, with account taken of the resources at its disposal.

4. That applied also to the concerns expressed by the representatives of Botswana, Lesotho, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, who had raised the question of the South African languages. That question was directly connected to the public information programmes against apartheid which were an important priority for DPI. In that regard, the anti-apartheid radio programmes produced so far had been aimed mostly at peoples in South Africa through the broadcasts of the front-line States. While it was essential to try to sustain the morale of the population in the region suffering under that hideous system of racial discrimination, the anti-apartheid information programmes also had to be quantitatively and qualitatively improved. DPI would have, for the first time, an integrated, well-planned, co-ordinated approach for a multi-media programme on that issue. The objective of that programme would be to maintain and encourage existing support for the struggle against apartheid and for Namibian independence and to sustain the morale of the people within South Africa and Namibia. Furthermore, the programme would attempt to strengthen international support for the independence of Namibia and the eradication of the despicable system of apartheid.

5. In that context, she assured the representative of Kenya, who had expressed concern about the Division for Economic and Social Information, that DPI did not intend to diminish the importance of the development information programme. A more integrated intra-departmental approach, together with the expanded co-operation with the specialized agencies recently initiated by the Secretary-General in the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, should strengthen even further the development information programme.

6. A large number of delegations had referred to the need for equitable geographical distribution in the staffing of the Department. She could not agree with them more. The widest possible geographical representation was absolutely imperative in order to achieve the level of excellence that she was committed to strive for in the Department. In view of the need for DPI to reach out to and communicate with all the peoples of the world, the Department must have talent drawn from the full range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds which only wide geographical representation could guarantee. While the situation in DPI was not

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(Mrs. Seigny)

substantially different from that in the Secretariat as a whole, it was not one which fully satisfied her. She assured the Committee, therefore, that she would spare no effort in seeking to bring about a steady improvement in that regard and stressed, in particular, that she was taking urgent measures to redress the current imbalance at the senior levels.

7. Some comments had been made concerning the use of consultants, and some of them had related to the geographical imbalance perceived to exist in a list circulated recently within the house. That particular list, which was quite incomplete, reflected a heavy imbalance. The Department of Public Information relied on a variety of resources in order to implement its programme of work. The regular staff resources were supplemented, as necessary, by short-term temporary assistance and by individual or corporate consultants, depending on the particular requirements. During 1987, such services had been contracted on more than 700 occasions, services as varied as contractual translation, serving as panelists in television programmes, and doing radio or video narrations. In the case of organizational management, the study to restructure the Department required her to act expeditiously in contracting individuals whose expertise was personally known to her. Naturally, that would not be the general practice since, in that respect as well, she was fully convinced of the necessity to ensure wide geographical representation.

8. Turning to the questions raised by certain delegations, notably those of the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Soviet Union, relating to the rationale for the restructuring plan and the number of organizational units and senior level staff, she reiterated that the overriding objective of the new structure was to obtain the maximum degree of efficiency in the functioning of the Department and effectiveness in the fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to it. To that end, and in an effort to eliminate to the maximum extent duplication of effort, DPI had aimed at consolidating functions and fields of expertise. In that way, it would be possible in the future to avoid the blurring of responsibilities in such areas as distribution, publications and many others. By consolidating them in functional areas, the Department would be able to achieve greater effectiveness with the limited resources available.

9. The importance attached by Member States to the world-wide system of United Nations information centres was fully appreciated. During the last session of the Committee on Information, she had emphasized how innovative and creative measures could help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of UNIC/UNIS, without jeopardizing the functional autonomy they must have to accomplish their tasks. She fully agreed with the many representatives who had expressed the view that the network of United Nations information centres should be furthered strengthened, streamlined and revitalized.

10. DPI was initiating a number of activities in that direction. An evaluation was being undertaken to ensure optimal management with the resources at the Department's disposal so that more countries could be covered, thereby extending the United Nations outreach to the peoples of the world. In view of the constant expansion of the activities of the United Nations, and in accordance with their

(Mrs. Seigny)

obligations under the public information mandates of the General Assembly, the information centres had steadily broadened the scope of their activities and increased direct and systematic communication with local institutions. The introduction of modern communication equipment, whenever practical, would be most helpful since the usefulness of public information material depended very much on their timely availability.

11. Quite a number of delegations, such as those of Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yemen, had stressed the importance of the training programmes. She emphasized that, despite financial cuts, DPI had consistently given priority to the training programme for journalists and broadcasters from developing countries, and that she would ensure the continuation of that important programme. The representatives of Kenya, Mali and Morocco had pointed out that the fellowship programme for educators had regrettably been suspended. In the context of the restructured DPI, it should be possible to revive it and develop other useful training programmes.

12. The representatives of Egypt and Trinidad and Tobago, among others, had urged DPI to strengthen its relationship with the non-aligned and the developing countries. The Department, as had been reported to the Committee on Information the previous summer, had continued to work closely with the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries. She intended to explore further ways to establish concrete programmes at the Third Conference of the Broadcasting Organizations of the Non-Aligned Countries (BONAC) to be held in Cyprus in mid-December 1987. A preliminary attempt had been made to co-operate with the Photo-Pool of the Non-Aligned Countries as well. She reassured the developing countries that she attached high priority to activities which could help strengthen the communication and information infrastructure of the developing countries in order to correct the existing imbalances.

13. In conclusion, she emphasized the strong commitment of the Department to the task of ensuring more efficient and effective information activities on behalf of the United Nations and the peoples of the world.

14. She was committed to conveying to as wide a public as possible the message that, in achieving those and other common human aspirations, the United Nations was more important and relevant than it had been four decades earlier.

15. It was an age of unparalleled and increasing complexity. Mankind was caught up in political, economic and technological change, which had reduced the visibility of the United Nations. Yet, the Organization had a much wider set of goals, preoccupations and concerns today and the citizens whom it represented faced many pressing tasks - disarmament, economic and social development, the resolution of conflicts, decolonization, the satisfaction of basic human needs and respect for human rights. The new global environment and the additional responsibilities of DPI required an adequate financial resource base. She wished to draw the attention of delegations most emphatically to that need.

16. Mr. RODRIGUEZ-MEDINA (Colombia) proposed that the statement by Mrs. Seigny should be given full coverage in the summary record of that meeting.

17. It was so decided.

18. Mr. KHUDYAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement made by the representative of the United States at the 28th meeting of the Committee was a striking example of "cold war" diplomacy and could be used as a handbook for Member States on "What Subjects to Avoid", including such topics as the new world information and communication order, "the new way of thinking" and "restructuring". The representative of the United States would have the members of the Committee discuss Dostoevski, socialist realism, Darwin, anything but the urgent problems affecting the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations.

19. The Soviet delegation could not ignore the defiant and didactic tone of that statement, which was in sharp contrast to the businesslike and constructive observations made by the other delegations. The rostrum of the United Nations should be used for discussing vital problems, not for moralizing. In proposing the establishment of a world information programme and the possibility of convening an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations in order to change views on the main questions relating to international information, the Soviet Union had invited delegations to discuss ideas and proposals in a dignified and courteous manner. It did not intend to listen to a medley of labels, accusations and erroneous conclusions. It was clear that the delegation of the United States had been occupied by other matters and had had no time to acquaint itself with the text of the Soviet statement.

20. He pointed out for the information of the representative of the United States that the proposal to establish a comprehensive system of international security had been put forward by all the socialist States, not only the Soviet Union. Lastly, in discussing the questions relating to United Nations information activities and the restructuring of DPI, the members of the Committee expected to hear replies to their queries from the Secretariat, not from an individual delegation which mistook the Secretariat building for its mission across the street.

21. Mr. POLICHTCHOUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that in his statement on the agenda item under consideration, he had pointed out that the socialist countries should be duly represented at the senior levels of the Department of Public Information. All the nationals from the Ukrainian SSR employed in the Department worked at the P-2 or P-3 levels and were very well qualified, which was fully in keeping with Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. Accordingly, the statement made by the representative of the United States, whose tone had been didactic and tactless, did not merit any reply.

22. Mr. KUNSTADTER (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, reminded the Committee that the next subject on its agenda for that meeting was a very important one, that of peace-keeping operations, and regretted that two delegations should have soured the tone.

(Mr. Kunstadter, United States)

23. It appeared that the representative of the Soviet Union had not taken time to listen carefully to the statement of the United States delegation or to read it in its printed form. What the United States representative had been talking about was concepts of information and communication. He had pointed out that language was a very important part of any concept of information and communication. He had also spoken seriously about the attention given in the United States at all levels to problems of development, including development of communication infrastructure and the efforts being made in his country to tackle them.

24. The opinions on the concept and exchange of information expressed each year by certain delegations, including that of the Soviet Union, did not seem to reflect new thinking. The United States had been built on new thinking and welcomed change. It therefore examined matters connected with new thinking, restructuring, publicity-mindedness or acceleration with great care because any country interested in adapting internally and externally to a changing world was taking its responsibility seriously. He was concerned at the totemic incantation of certain words, and the practice of using the Special Political Committee to link the item under discussion with a matter which was being discussed in the First Committee.

25. The United States delegation had talked about the importance of a free flow of information based on true development in a republican or democratic system.

26. A people's knowledge of its history was of crucial importance. He would give just one example of how history was treated in the Soviet Union. The contemporary writer, Yevgenii Yevtushenko had described how, at a youth camp, it had been stated that perhaps 10 or 12 people had lost their lives in Stalin's purges in the 1930s. Yet Mr. Gorbachev had said in his recent statement in Moscow that many thousands had lost their lives in those purges. It might be healthy if a system such as that of the Soviet Union could tolerate open discussion of its past within its own country, especially since there were many talented historians in the Soviet Union. They might or might not decide that events since the 1930s had been necessary. However, it took courage to allow free debate and access to information. It was sometimes very difficult to find classics of Russian literature in the Soviet Union because they were printed in small numbers or not at all.

27. In considering information issues in the Special Political Committee and in the Committee on Information, it was necessary to discuss pragmatic, practical ways of helping countries to develop their communications infrastructures and to discuss in an intelligent and reasoned way how to further the work of DPI, and adapt it to changing conditions.

28. It was encouraging to hear from the statement of the representative of the Ukrainian SSR that more qualified women were taking United Nations examinations. That would change the situation where, according to the report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/C.5/42/L.2) there were 25 Ukrainian staff members in the Secretariat at the Professional level, all of them men.

(Mr. Kunstadter, United States)

29. What underlay his statement at the preceding meeting was the need expressed in the Helsinki Final Act and the Madrid Concluding Document for a free exchange of information with no barriers.

30. It was possible to buy the monthly edition of Pravda in English in kiosks and supermarkets in New York. It would be an interesting development if the same was true in the Soviet Union, even for Western publications in English. Should that happen, it would be seen that words were being expressed in deeds and the international community would be on the way to true mutual understanding.

31. Mr. KHUDYAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that at the preceding meeting, he had listened to a lecture on literature and at the current meeting, there seemed to be a lecture by the United States representative on history and the contemporary situation in the Soviet Union. He wished to assure the United States delegation that he was fully aware of the history of the Soviet Union and of the current state of affairs and the powerful winds of change which were blowing. On the other hand, he would resist the attempts being made to drag the Committee into a discussion irrelevant to the item under consideration.

32. After the conclusion of the debate on questions relating to information in the Committee, a working group was to try to draft the final documents on that item on the basis of equality and free expression of views. He invited the United States delegation, at least once, to show respect for the international community and take part in working out those final documents.

33. Mr. KUNSTADTER (United States of America) said that his delegation always showed respect for the work of the United Nations. In response to the last request by the representative of the Soviet Union, his delegation fully agreed.

AGENDA ITEM 75: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/454, 455, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 650)

34. Mr. RAMIN (Israel) said that the item under consideration, like all items before the General Assembly, did not exist in a vacuum. He could not accept certain claims which might restrict his right to explain his Government's position. Israel had taken steps to prevent subversion and disruption of life in the areas under discussion.

35. In that connection, it was essential to consider the position taken by certain neighbouring States - those which supported subversion and those which were victimized by it. The groups which carried out such activity did not operate only in Judea, Samaria, the Gaza District and Israel itself but also directed their subversive activities against neighbouring countries. Those matters had been

(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

regularly raised by his and other delegations during the debate on the item in previous sessions of the Committee.

36. The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (A/42/650) was again replete with false accusations and distortions of truth. By painstaking analysis of the report, his delegation had, as in the past, shown its utter unreliability in many respects. Yet the Special Committee was assured of the extension of its mandate so long as it reached the predetermined conclusions expected of it.

37. Anyone could visit Israel and the territories under its administration, speak with anyone he wished and see its democracy in action. He could also see the considerable development which had taken place in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District.

38. The Special Committee took it that the presence of Israel, particularly in the parts of mandated Palestine formerly occupied by Jordan and Egypt, constituted the original sin from which stemmed all evil, entirely ignoring the circumstances behind Israel's presence in those territories. The Special Committee consistently conveyed misguided concepts about security issues and the regional political background in a way that made it impossible to understand properly the situation in the territories.

39. Everyone knew that those territories had played a significant role in the Arab wars against Israel. Before the birth of the State of Israel, the Jewish national liberation movement had suffered indirect and then direct aggression by the League of Arab States. From those territories, as well as from the north and south, the Arab States had launched their war against Israel in 1948. The Jewish community had been left with a choice between annihilation and self-defence. The result was the survival of Israel and the occupation of certain parts of mandated Palestine. The present territorial situation derived directly from the outcome of the Arab aggression in 1967.

40. Ever since Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District had been under Israeli control, the Arab rejectionists had tried to reconvert them into forward bases. They had allocated the terrorist Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) a special role to use the territories as bridgeheads for acts of hostility, terror, sabotage and subversion against Israel and its civilian population.

41. The application of the principles of human rights in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District could not be examined without reference to the circumstances prevailing there. International law clearly recognized the fact that, in addition to ensuring the welfare of the local population, the authorities had a clear duty to protect that population, together with their own, against the dangers of disorder and terrorism.

42. As in previous years, the Special Committee had focused attention on the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. As it had stated in the past, it was the

(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

considered opinion of the Israeli Government that that Convention was not applicable as such in the areas administered by Israel. In that, it had the support of acknowledged authorities in international law. Israel maintained that in view of the sui generis status of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District, the de jure applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to those areas was doubtful. Israel preferred to leave aside the legal question of the status of those areas and had decided, since 1967, to act de facto in accordance with the humanitarian provisions of that Convention.

43. Some held the contrary view, not always for purely legal reasons. However, notwithstanding the legal aspects of the question, Israel applied the principles of the fourth Geneva Convention in the area and even went further than the requirements. For example, the fourth Geneva Convention allowed capital punishment, whereas Israel had never applied the death penalty in the occupied areas, despite acts of indiscriminate murder and terrorist outrages. The Convention did not provide for access by local populations to the courts of the administering Power whereas Israel allowed access irrespective of whether the cases were being brought against individuals, the Government of Israel or any of its officials. There was no provision in the Convention for facilitating movement of the local population outside the territories, whereas Israel permitted such movement in both directions, including movement to and from Arab countries which regarded themselves as being in a state of war with Israel. Inter alia, Israel facilitated pilgrimages to Makkah, where, as he had said in a previous statement, an Israeli citizen had been killed. The Convention said nothing about trade abroad by the territories in question, whereas Israel facilitated such trade, even with Arab countries.

44. Over the years, the Special Committee had relied on article 49 of the fourth Geneva Convention to support its thesis that no settlements by Israelis were allowed in the administered areas. No question of practices affecting the human rights of the local population arose there, but even if the laws of belligerent occupation were for some reason applicable, it should be borne in mind that article 49 of the fourth Geneva Convention, which was distorted by the Special Committee, forbade forcible transfers and not voluntary acts of individuals wishing to take up residence in the areas concerned. The leading treaties on that matter, Oppenheim-Lauterpacht's International Law, volume II, seventh edition (1952), page 452, stated that the provision contained in article 49 of the fourth Geneva Convention was a prohibition intended to cover cases of the occupant bringing in its nationals for the purpose of displacing the population of the occupied territory. No displacement of the local population had taken place. In fact, the population of the administered areas had increased since 1967 by about 28 per cent. It was clear therefore that article 49 of the Convention did not apply.

45. In its attempt to distort the realities prevailing in the territories administered by Israel, the Special Committee had chosen to disregard the crimes committed on behalf of the terrorist PLO and its affiliates. Those acts would be punishable in all countries. According to its Government, the declared aim of that

(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

terrorist organization was to liquidate the State of Israel through "armed struggle". Disregard of those realities seriously detracted from any analysis of the subject under discussion.

46. In order to counter the perverted picture presented by the Special Committee of the conditions obtaining in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District, he wished to describe the true situation. Since 1967, the Israeli Government had carried out a constructive programme of development, marked by human concern for the inhabitants. Visitors to those areas noted the absence of large numbers of troops, and the civil police were largely recruited locally. Agriculture continued to be the chief economic activity of those areas. The sharing of Israel's expertise with local farmers, the introduction of modern farming methods and increased use of mechanized equipment after 1967 had doubled agricultural production per unit of land and brought the rate of growth to about 10 per cent per year.

47. Prior to 1967, lack of raw materials, infrastructure and skilled workers had limited industry in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza District to small workshops and factories. Since then, new industrial enterprises had been established, and productivity in existing enterprises had risen, primarily due to the increased investment and upgrading of the labour force through extensive vocational training programmes.

48. Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District had been characterized by a very low labour force participation rate and chronic unemployment (10 per cent in Judea and Samaria, over 40 per cent in the Gaza District). Since 1967, the opening of Israel's labour market to residents of the areas had greatly improved employment opportunities, bringing virtually full employment to both areas for the first time in their history. A network of 38 employment offices, staffed by residents of the areas, had been established to direct workers to vacancies and to ensure that they received the pay and benefits prescribed by law.

49. The Government-sponsored vocational education had been virtually non-existent in the years before 1967. Currently, 26 vocational training centres were in operation in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District, with about 4,500 trainees obtaining diplomas in over 200 courses per year. Those courses varied according to local needs, with the current emphasis on teaching industrial skills to teenage youth. Since 1968, about 25 per cent of the area's labour force had participated in one or more training courses or upgrading programmes.

50. The participation of women in society had increased, and they now comprised 20 per cent of graduates of vocational training courses, 44 per cent of students enrolled at local universities and 11 per cent of the labour force.

51. In the early 1970s, about one half of the adult population of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District had never attended school, and only 19 per cent had nine or more years of education. A decade later, those without any schooling had declined to 28 per cent, while 38 per cent had completed nine or more years. The school systems of both areas had expanded substantially since 1967, with more girls

(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

attending school, more pupils continuing into the upper grades and more and better-qualified teachers available.

52. Education in both areas was free and compulsory at the primary and intermediate levels and free at the secondary level. The pre-existing structures and standards had been retained, following Jordanian curricula in Judea and Samaria and Egyptian curricula in the Gaza District. In each area, the educational system included government schools, which were financed and operated by the civil administration, provided 14 years of free schooling and accounted for 65 per cent of all pupils, the UNRWA schools, which offered nine years of free schooling, and various private schools. There had been no universities in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District in 1967. Since that time, six universities had been established with the authorization and encouragement of the civil administration.

53. Since 1967, the focus of social service activities in the administered areas had changed from the distribution of food and money to destitute people to an emphasis on occupational and physical rehabilitation designed to help recipients help themselves. There were more than twice as many social service bureaux operating in the areas today than in 1967. Community development projects had been initiated, particularly in the Gaza District where more than 10,000 families had been enabled to leave refugee camps and relocate in new residential areas.

54. The health situation in both areas had improved greatly, as was indicated by an increase in life expectancy from 48 years in 1967 to 62 years today. Epidemics had been brought under control and, with the immunization of about 90 per cent of the areas' children, the incidence of infectious diseases in early childhood had decreased sharply. In Judea and Samaria, the number of health clinics had more than doubled, and in the Gaza District new health facilities had been established to provide medical services for every village. Hospitals in both areas had been reorganized and upgraded. Regular interaction between medical institutions in the administered areas and those in Israel had served to promote efficient hospital administration and patient care and to provide consultation opportunities for difficult cases.

55. There were now almost twice as many health service employees as there had been in 1967. Twelve nursing schools had been opened in the areas since 1971, and they had a current enrolment of about 600 students. Voluntary health insurance plans were now available to all area residents, and about 40 per cent of the residents of Judea and Samaria and 80 per cent of the population of the Gaza District were covered for hospitalization and other health services.

56. Since 1968, more than 9 million persons had crossed the bridges over the Jordan River in both directions. Arabs from Judea, Samaria and Gaza entered and left Israel freely, as did Israelis and foreign visitors wishing to visit those areas. Residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza could invite relatives from enemy countries for prolonged visits, and large numbers of people entered the areas in that manner every year.

(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

57. The civil and religious tribunals in the administered areas, which were made up of local judges, had continued to function and to apply the civil and religious laws that had previously been in force.
58. The Arabic press criticized the Israeli authorities whenever it saw fit to do so. As in Israel, censorship was confined to questions of military security, as was necessary in a country not yet at peace with all its neighbours, and it applied to Hebrew and Arabic newspapers alike.
59. There were indeed occasional demonstrations and acts of defiance in the administered areas, largely instigated from outside. The situation in Judea, Samaria and Gaza was satisfactory in comparison with that in many other countries which were not privileged to receive so much attention from the United Nations. If an impartial observer was to survey the political and security situation in any other country of the region, he would find that disruptions of day-to-day life in the territories in question were far less significant.
60. A distorted version of the situation prevailing in the areas administered by Israel had been given in the report of the Special Committee, which ignored the positive aspects of life there. The activities of the Special Committee, which was indeed a very special committee and membership of which had become a sinecure, should be brought to an end. The Special Committee had no valid reason to engage in a repetitive and unproductive exercise in a way designed to obstruct reconciliation and peace in the region.
61. A positive and constructive approach was required on the part of all concerned, including the Palestinian Arabs living in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District. Rather than encouraging the annual sterile and obscene anti-Israel ritual, the General Assembly should support the efforts being made for peace in the region in a manner worthy of the true principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.
62. Mr. SHAH (Pakistan) said that the measures instituted by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories aimed not only at changing their demographic character but also at undermining existing social, cultural, political and educational structures in an attempt to destroy the identity of the Palestinian people.
63. Israel's allegations of bias against the Special Committee could not be sustained. It had refused to co-operate with the Special Committee because it did not wish the United Nations and the international community to obtain a firsthand account of its flagrant violations of international law and of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which was applicable to the Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967.
64. The exploitation and looting of the resources of the occupied territories, attempts to Judaize the system of education, the pillaging of the local

(Mr. Shah, Pakistan)

archeological and cultural heritage and interference with the freedom of worship in the Holy Places had been undertaken with a view to obliterating the physical and political character and cultural characteristics of those territories. His delegation would like to express its concern at the Israeli excavations in the vicinity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which would weaken the foundations and transform the physical setting of important Islamic shrines and monuments.

65. The general climate of tension and repression in the occupied territories had worsened, and the various forms of humiliation to which the Arab population was subjected had been intensified. The right of family reunification had been denied and, in some cases, even children had not been immune from indiscriminate violence. Collective punishment, arbitrary expulsion and deportation had continued. The control exerted by Israel over water resources had subjected workers and farmers to increasing interference and harassment.

66. In calling for the extension of the mandate of the Special Committee, his delegation wished to stress the need for the international community to assume its responsibilities in order to prevent further deterioration and to provide adequate safeguards for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the civilians in the occupied territories.

67. His delegation strongly condemned policies of aggression, annexation and expansion wherever they might occur in the world. It called upon Israel to withdraw from all the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and to refrain from any action which might further exacerbate tensions in a highly volatile area.

68. Pakistan saluted the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people, which had emerged stronger from each ordeal and more confident of the ultimate triumph of its cause. Only if Israel accepted the justice of the Palestinian cause and restrained its expansionist appetite and aggressive designs could peace be restored to the region.

69. Mr. FANG Dihui (China) said that his delegation wished to express its deep regret that Israel had chosen to ignore world public opinion and General Assembly resolutions urging it to respect the human rights of the population of the occupied territories.

70. As could be seen from the current report of the Special Committee, the Israeli authorities had stepped up their violations of human rights in the occupied territories, had continued to seize lands belonging to the Arab inhabitants and had established more Jewish settlements. Many Arabs had been expelled from their homeland and deprived of their means of survival. The obvious aim of the Israeli authorities was to change the demographic composition of the occupied territories so as to perpetuate their occupation. Such actions were in contravention of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and also of the principles of international law prohibiting the acquisition of territory by force.

(Mr. Fang Dihuai, China)

71. Since Israeli practices affecting human rights had naturally met with resistance from the local inhabitants, relations between them and the Israeli authorities had always been marked by tension and confrontation. The most recent example had been the demonstrations that had taken place to mark the fourteenth anniversary of the war of October 1973, in the course of which Israeli soldiers had opened fire and caused heavy casualties. His delegation wished to express its condemnation of such actions.

72. His delegation was of the view that, in order to put an end to Israeli violations of human rights in the occupied territories, it was imperative to seek a comprehensive and just settlement of the Middle East question and to terminate the Israeli military occupation altogether. His Government had consistently opposed Israel's policies of aggression and expansion and had firmly supported the Palestinian and other Arab peoples and their just struggle to recover the occupied territories and restore their national rights. Israel must withdraw from all the Arab territories it had occupied since 1967. All countries in the region had a right to exist and a right to independence. His delegation favoured the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and supported the efforts being made by the Secretary-General to that end. The Palestine Liberation Organization, which was internationally recognized as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, was entitled to participate in the Conference on an equal footing. His delegation hoped that the Arab countries and the PLO would make a concerted effort to bring about a comprehensive and just settlement of the Middle East question at an early date.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.