

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING
held on Monday, 22 April 1968, at 11 a.m.

Temporary President: U THANT

Secretary-General of
the United Nations

President: H.I.H. Princess Ashraf PAHLAVI

Iran

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE (item 1 of the provisional agenda)

In the presence of H.I.M. The Shahinshah Aryamehr and of H.I.M. Farah Pahlavi, Shahbanoo of Iran, the TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN declared open the International Conference on Human Rights, 1968. The Conference was highly honoured by the presence of H.I.M. The Shahinshah Aryamehr, who had graciously consented to deliver the opening address.

ADDRESS BY H.I.M. THE SHAHINSHAH ARYAMEHR

H.I.M. The Shahinshah ARYAMEHR delivered the opening address.^{1/}

ADDRESS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (item 3 of the provisional agenda)

U THANT (Secretary-General of the United Nations) delivered an address in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.^{2/}

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT (item 2 of the provisional agenda)

Mr. CASSIN (France) proposed Princess Ashraf Pahlavi (Iran) for the office of President. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi had given ample proof of her interest in the cause of human rights, both in her own country and in the United Nations, and was thus eminently fitted to guide the deliberations of the Conference.

Mr. NEDBAILLO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. PANT (India), Mrs. AHMED (Pakistan), Miss BENITEZ (Philippines), Mr. KHALEF (Iraq) and Mr. MOHAMMED (Nigeria) supported the nomination.

Princess Ashraf Pahlavi (Iran) was elected President by acclamation.

Princess Ashraf Pahlavi took the Chair.

The PRESIDENT wished first to express her gratitude for the confidence that the Conference had shown in her in electing her to office. The Conference, she was sure, wished through her to honour her country and people, who were engaged in a major economic and social revolution, the main object of which was to create the requisite conditions for the full implementation of human rights in Iran.

If she were called upon to describe the Conference in a few words, she would say that it was one of recall, questioning and decision. It would be one of recall, for there could be no human enterprise without memory. Those among the participants who had taken part in the drafting and adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

^{1/} The text of this address appears in the Final Act of the Conference, annex II, A.

^{2/} The text of this address appears in the Final Act, annex II, B.

would know what she meant. Twenty years had passed since the vote on that document, which the General Assembly had described as a historic act designed to strengthen world peace through the efforts of the United Nations to free the individual from the oppression and illegal constraints to which he was all too often subjected. Almost twenty years had passed since the General Assembly, meeting in Paris on 10 December 1948, had solemnly proclaimed the thirty articles of the first universal moral code. It was impossible not to recall the conditions obtaining at that far-distant epoch, when the world had just passed through the terrible trial whose devastating effects had still been felt almost everywhere. The generous impulse of the General Assembly had given rise to great hopes among the suffering peoples, who had seen the spectre of destruction and misfortune fading away. At the outset of its work, the Conference should recall all those things and should spare a grateful thought to the memory of all the men of good will who had worked to bring the Declaration into being.

The Conference must also be one of questioning. Twenty years was the time for coming of age, the time at which to question the road one was following. The Declaration, although universal in scope, had come into being at a specific date in the development of the United Nations; indeed, only much later had most of the then colonial countries achieved independence. It also corresponded to a certain moment in the evolution of ideas about human rights. Although the principle of economic and social justice was implicitly recognized in it, the nature and scope of the rights in question had been left unspecified. Moreover, in that relatively short period of time, the world, borne in the wake of one of the most explosive scientific and technical revolutions in history, had adopted accelerated rhythm of an unprecedented change. It was therefore only natural to wonder whether the Declaration and the programmes undertaken by the United Nations family in the field of human rights since 1948 had lived up to their promises. Fortunately, an assessment of that kind was provided for under items 9 and 10 of the agenda. Without wishing to prejudge the result of that review, she felt that she could rightly say that, while much had been done, still more remained to be accomplished.

Over the past twenty years, thanks to the Declaration and to the efforts made by the United Nations and the specialized agencies, there had developed a global concept of human rights, going beyond the "classic freedoms" to embrace also economic, social and cultural rights. It represented a vast programme. "Declarations" relating to one or other right had come into existence. Two important Covenants, on civil and political

rights and on economic, social and cultural rights, had been adopted by the General Assembly in 1966. Conventions and recommendations relating to discrimination in education and in employment had been produced. Lastly, the non-governmental international organizations and various national associations had done effective work.

While all those were encouraging achievements, there was still great cause for concern. Racism with its train of misery and injustice was still rampant in many parts of the world. Intolerance of every kind still kept many human groups apart. The gap between the rich and the developing countries continued to grow. More than one third of the world's population was still beset by hunger, disease and ignorance.

In view of that state of affairs, the Conference was obliged to ask itself some questions. It behoved the Conference to identify the main obstacles to the full implementation of human rights at both the international and the national level. It was its duty to appraise the effectiveness of the methods and of techniques employed hitherto. Above all, it was called upon to draw up a programme of effective and coherent action that would lead to decisive progress towards true and full respect for the dignity of the human person.

Item 11 of the agenda would enable the Conference to assess the immensity of the task yet to be accomplished. In the world of today large regions still suffered hunger and hundreds of millions of illiterates had no means of obtaining education. It was a world where discrimination and hatred still flourished, where some countries were adopting racism as a method of government, despite United Nations decisions, and where educated men dared to justify the odious form of segregation known as "apartheid". It was a world where the cannon still thundered, where deadly armies still threatened millions of human lives, where peoples were still subjected to the colonial yoke, and where more than half of the population were deprived of their most elementary needs. In those circumstances, the provisions of the Universal Declaration were still, for vast numbers of people, no more than promises.

If, however, the vast means provided by science and technology were used in a more reasonable and equitable fashion, they would enable those promises to be kept within a relatively short period of time. It was in that sense that the Conference became one of decision. It was called upon to overcome obstacles to the full implementation of human rights. The will to succeed must be its inspiration. She would urgently appeal for that will to be strengthened to the full. It was the sacred duty of the Conference to draw up an effective and powerful programme of action before it came to a close. For the

majority of the world's inhabitants, the Declaration was still no more than theory. It must be constantly borne in mind that a theory which was not put into practice ended by condemning its supporters.

The moment had come to promote the forceful measures needed to give full effect to human rights. She was sure that all the participants were fully aware of the immensity and importance of the task. They had not come to the Conference to produce polished texts or weak compromises; they had come to deal with a problem that brooked no delay, the problem of the human condition. The Conference must become the spearhead in the great struggle for human justice. It must demonstrate to the world its determination to put an end, once and for all, to the remaining vestiges of hatred, racism, hunger, disease and ignorance.

SPECIAL MESSAGES ADDRESSED TO THE CONFERENCE

At the request of the President, Mr. SCHREIBER (Executive Secretary of the Conference) read out the text of messages received from H.H. Pope Paul VI, the President of the Twenty-second Session of the General Assembly, the President of the Republic of Finland, the President of the Republic of Turkey, the President of the United States of America, the President of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden^{3/} and the Chairman and members of the World Council of Churches.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

On the proposal of Mr. KANYEIHAMBA (Uganda), the members of the Conference observed one minute's silence in tribute to the memory of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mr. WILKINS (United States of America) said that he was sure he was speaking for all the members of his delegation, as also for the millions of Americans who had been outraged, saddened and shocked by the tragedy that had overcome their country, in expressing thanks for the tribute paid to a fellow-countryman who at the same time had been a countryman of every human being in the world.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

^{3/} The complete text of these messages appears in the Final Act of the Conference, annex III, A to H.