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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUBAREZ (Yemen)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 61: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
(continued) (A/SPC/37/L.33 and L.34)

1. Mr. PRASAD (India), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.33 on behalf of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cuba, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Pakistan, Qatar and his own delegation, said that it had once again become necessary to introduce such a resolution because of the unabated strangulation of educational institutions in the occupied territories. Freedom of education was the most vital ingredient in the development of youth, and its infringement, for example by Military Order No. 854, was a heinous crime against humanity. The sponsors of the draft resolution firmly believed in academic freedom and free access to education and fervently hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

2. Mr. WEEDY (Afghanistan), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.34 on behalf of Bangladesh, Cuba, India, Madagascar, Malaysia, Qatar and his own delegation, said that the use of violence against the population of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories was widespread and took a variety of forms. Apart from the open resort to violence by the Israeli authorities, prominent Palestinians were easy targets for assassination and harassment by individuals or groups acting with impunity. As the occupying Power, it was Israel's responsibility to protect the people of the occupied territories and to prosecute the perpetrators of such crimes. On behalf of the co-sponsors, he would like to urge Member States to support the draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 67: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued) (A/SPC/37/L.15, L.16, L.18 and L.35)

3. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the two draft resolutions contained in documents A/SPC/37/L.15 and L.16, both submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Special Political Committee on the basis of deliberations in the open-ended Working Group on "Questions relating to information". The administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 were set forth in document A/SPC/37/L.35, and an amendment to that draft resolution was contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18.

4. Mr. LICHENSTEIN (United States of America), introducing the amendment to draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18, said that the amendment would authorize the Secretary-General to implement the activities approved under the draft resolution only to the extent that they could be financed without exceeding the level of resources approved in the 1982-1983 programme budget. Rather than vitiate those activities, the amendment would allow the Secretary-General to choose among existing programmes and decide on the priority to be assigned to each.

5. His delegation had repeatedly stated its opposition to the appropriation of additional resources for the Department of Public Information and believed that its

(Mr. Lichenstein, United States)

current budget was sufficient for the implementation of all the new high-priority programmes requested in the draft resolution through the redeployment of resources from activities of lower priority. The initial request for \$697,700, as set out in document A/SPC/37/L.35, was excessive and unjustified. While ACABQ and the Fifth Committee would review that request, his delegation would like to raise a number of questions regarding the proposals contained in the statement of financial implications. In paragraph 7 of that document, it was proposed to employ consultancy services at a cost of \$72,000 for the study requested in paragraph 20 of the draft resolution. In the light of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the matter, it would appear that no additional resources should be provided.

6. With regard to the proposal to create an additional Professional post to service the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies in accordance with paragraph 21 of the draft resolution, ACABQ had recommended at the thirty-sixth session that a request to strengthen a body or to strengthen co-operation did not automatically entail the allocation of additional resources. Resources had been allocated for that purpose at the thirty-sixth session in spite of the recommendation of ACABQ.

7. His delegation was unconvinced that the establishment of new United Nations Information Centres at Luanda and Brazzaville would require six additional posts at each centre since centres in cities of comparable size were adequately served by smaller staffs.

8. His delegation could not support the request for an additional \$697,700 in 1983 to implement the draft resolution in question. It expected that a far smaller sum would be requested after ACABQ and the Fifth Committee had reviewed the proposals but considered that, in view of the current level and explosive growth of the DPI budget, no additional resources whatever were justified. His delegation was confident that the amendment proposed would allow the Secretary-General to implement the draft resolution without any impact on the priority activities of DPI. Adoption of the amendment would, on the contrary, provide the Secretary-General with an appropriate incentive to demand that DPI should fulfil its responsibilities in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

9. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the members of the Group of 77, said that, when the two draft resolutions had been introduced, he had understood that consideration of the amendment contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18 would be deferred to a later date. The Group of 77 had, therefore, hoped that that amendment would not actually be presented at all. The amendment introduced a new element into the consensus achieved in draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 which nullified all the work done during extensive deliberations in the Committee on Information, as well as during the informal consultations on the drafting. The Group of 77 had urged all members of the Committee not to destroy the consensus achieved with such difficulty by the introduction of elements which would not be helpful to the purposes of the resolution. Extensive consultations had taken place with a view to making the public information activities of the United Nations more effective and adopting the measures necessary for that purpose. If such measures required the allocation of additional resources, it had been agreed by consensus to

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

provide them. When recommendations were adopted, responsibility for providing the necessary resources must be accepted. The Group of 77 felt that the introduction of the amendment nullified the recommendations of the Committee on Information as well as the provisions of the draft resolution. For that reason, the Group requested the withdrawal of the amendment.

10. The Group of 77 felt that the statement of financial implications contained in document A/SPC/37/L.35 did not meet its expectations. Some of the recommendations of the Committee on Information could not be implemented properly on the basis of the financial proposals contained in that document. In paragraphs 4 and 24 in particular, the mandate given by the Committee on Information had not been adequately reflected. Those matters should be given closer attention in the consideration of document A/SPC/37/L.35 by the Fifth Committee and ACABQ.

11. If the amendment contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18 was not withdrawn, the Group of 77 would feel obliged to give full expression to its views on that document.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee was ready to take a decision on the amendment to draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18 and on draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.15 and A/SPC/37/L.16.

13. It was so decided.

14. At the request of the representative of Bangladesh, a recorded vote was taken on the amendment to draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18.

In favour: Israel, United States of America.

Against: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Democratic Yemen, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Oman, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Abstaining: Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

15. The amendment contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18 was rejected by 72 votes to 2, with 31 abstentions.

16. A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Israel.

17. The draft resolution was adopted by 105 votes to 1, with 1 abstention.

18. Mr. LICHENSTEIN (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that his delegation had entered into consultations on the draft resolution in good faith and with the earnest hope that it might be possible to achieve a consensus. The same could be said of most members of the Committee, and his delegation was particularly appreciative of all those who had participated in the open-ended Working Group. The fact that a consensus had not been reached

(Mr. Lichenstein, United States)

should not be allowed to diminish the importance of the effort or to distract attention from the improvements that had been agreed upon. Deliberations had increasingly focused on certain key issues and on principles fundamental to the flow of ideas and information and to the strengthening of the institutions of freedom everywhere in the world.

19. His delegation had made it clear at the outset that it could not join a consensus on a resolution if its implementation was to require the allocation of additional resources. Resistance to the growth of the United Nations budget was one of the highest obligations of all Member States and one which could not be deferred or delegated. Since the United Nations did not have access to inexhaustible resources, priorities had to be established, and programmes of declining importance must be phased out to make way for new and more valuable programmes. It was not only a question of fiscal responsibility but of the viability of an Organization seeking to achieve the goals of the United Nations Charter.

20. The resolutions of the General Assembly on questions relating to information were focusing less and less on the fundamental processes to enhancing the free flow of ideas and information and more and more on using the communications media to achieve particular, short-term goals which were essentially partisan in nature. As his delegation had stated in the general debate on questions relating to information, there had been confusion between image-building and the free flow of ideas and information and confusion between information as an instrument of political conflict and as an essential building-block of a free society. Draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 contributed to the dangerous tendency to institutionalize such confusion and diverted attention from the proper and essential concerns of the Committee. It tended to impose on the free media specific outcomes, specific tasks and specific responsibilities. His Government felt obliged to oppose such impermissible restraints on the freedom, independence and professionalism of the communications media.

21. Consultations on the item before the Committee had been conducted in good faith, and his delegation remained convinced of the value of that process. For his country, however, some principles were ultimately non-negotiable and it was on that ground that his delegation had based its opposition to draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15.

22. Mr. AL-AGROOBI (United Arab Emirates) said that, if his delegation had been present during the vote, it would have voted against the amendment contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18 and in favour of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15.

23. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that, if his delegation had been present during the vote, it would have voted against the amendment contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18 and in favour of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15.

24. Mr. NOORANI (Pakistan) said that if his delegation had been present during the vote it would have voted against the amendment contained in document A/SPC/37/L.18.

25. Mr. BAALI (Algeria) said that the Working Group had spent a great deal of time labouriously negotiating the text adopted by the Committee. There had been an abiding concern to reach a consensus, and it had been in that spirit that the Group of 77 had made major concessions in relation to its working document. It was, therefore, with great surprise that his delegation had learnt that one delegation had decided not to join the consensus but to vote against the draft resolution. It would like to voice its scepticism about the usefulness of negotiating on a text in order to reach a consensus when one delegation could, for whatever reason it saw fit, then destroy that consensus.

26. Mr. GAYAMA (Congo) said that his delegation deplored the fact that the Committee had not, at the present session, managed to arrive at its customary consensus on the omnibus resolution on questions relating to information. That had been due basically to a lack of good will in the negotiations. To say that there were principles which were non-negotiable was tantamount to denying the very principle of negotiation. In some committees, resolutions were adopted in which the views of many delegations were reflected and on which no financial restrictions were imposed. In the First Committee, for example, there had been a resolution on the reduction of military budgets which had, paradoxically, required the establishment of a system costing more than \$2 million. Yet no delegation, not even those who expressed concern at budgetary growth, had raised objections. At the same time, it had been stated in the Special Political Committee that no increase whatever in the budget of DPI would be accepted. That represented a clear and unacceptable lack of good faith. In future, good faith would be necessary so that those who worked for consensus would not have to make pointless concessions.

27. Mr. LEVIN (Israel) said that, while his delegation recognized and appreciated the importance of the subject dealt with in draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15, since it had in fact come to a vote, Israel had had no alternative but to abstain. That was particularly true with respect to paragraph 22 of the resolution. The reason for that was set out in detail in the letter of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the Secretary-General reproduced in document A/37/601. It was a question of DPI being used for purposes of adverse propaganda against a Member State.

28. The CHAIRMAN said he understood that the Committee was ready to take a decision on draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.16. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the resolution without a vote.

29. Draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.16 was adopted without a vote.

30. Mr. LICHENSTEIN (United States of America) said that it had become clear during the deliberations of the Working Group that delegations were approaching the draft resolution on the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) from very different positions. His delegation would have preferred a resolution which focused on the concept of IPDC and its specific work, but had agreed to a resolution of broader scope because of the strong wishes of the Group of 77. Many of the contents of the resolution under consideration duplicated the themes and provisions of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15. Certain paragraphs had little or no relevance to the work of IPDC. In particular, his country could not accept any implication of a connection between the Programme and implementation of the Declaration mentioned in paragraph 2.

(Mr. Lichenstein, United States)

31. Nevertheless, as a wholehearted supporter of IPDC, his Government had joined the consensus on the draft resolution because it gave recognition to the important work of the Programme and to its underlying principles of donor initiation of specific projects and the melding of public and private resources and expertise to build and strengthen institutions which might enhance the free flow of ideas and information throughout the world.

32. Mr. BRATTSTRÖM (Sweden) said he wished to explain his delegation's position on all the documents that had been considered. It had voted in favour of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 and had joined the consensus on A/SPC/37/L.16, but it wished to clarify its attitude to the former for the record. As was known, his country maintained a reservation against article 20, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Since the third preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 referred specifically to article 20 of the Covenant, he wished to reiterate his country's reservation in that respect.

33. His delegation thought that, in the current stringent financial situation, the share of resources already allocated to public information work should be sufficient to cover additional activities. It therefore sympathized with efforts to limit further growth of the DPI budget, but it had not been able to support the amendment proposed in document A/SPC/37/L.18 because the restriction which it sought to impose was categorical and incompatible with support for the substance of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15.

34. His delegation supported the call for co-operation with the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies contained in operative paragraph 21 of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 and understood that DPI would in fact co-operate fully with all news agencies.

35. In conclusion and with reference to paragraph 17 of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15, he wished to reiterate his Government's view that the principle of equitable geographical distribution was applicable to the staff of the United Nations Secretariat as a whole, not to the composition of any single department or specific unit.

36. Mr. HAYASHI (Japan) said his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 and had joined the consensus on L.16 in a spirit of conciliation and co-operation, although it did not agree completely with certain paragraphs. It felt that the two draft resolutions could have been combined. Furthermore, with reference to the paragraphs referring to a new world information and communication order, his delegation wished to stress its belief that the principles of freedom of speech and freedom of the press must be secured in the establishment of any such order.

37. Mr. AKASHI (Under-Secretary-General for Public Information) said that the adoption of draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.15 and A/SPC/37/L.16 testified to the constructive and co-operative approach which had always characterized deliberations in the Committee on questions relating to information. He wished to pay a

(Mr. Akashi)

particular tribute to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Information and the spokesman for the Group of 77 for their contribution to that achievement. DPI would take draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.16 as the latest authoritative guide in its task of publishing and disseminating information in order to increase public understanding and support for the United Nations.

38. DPI's task was a complex and often sensitive one. Its raw materials were the activities of the various United Nations bodies and organizations and the positions which they adopted on a multitude of issues. But when DPI presented material on controversial issues, often in response to direct requests, it was liable to be charged with partisanship and stirring up controversy. The DPI also had to reconcile the role of impartial civil servants with that of faithful advocates of decisions taken by intergovernmental bodies exercising supervisory functions over the Secretariat. Those problems were inherent in the work of DPI but, with the Committee's support, it was more than willing to grapple with the challenges and asked only for understanding of the constraints under which it operated.

39. The Committee on Information's recommendations, supplemented by General Assembly resolutions on information matters, determined DPI's priorities and tasks. It was from the deliberations of the Special Political Committee and the Committee on Information that new functions emerged for DPI to perform. He wished to assure those representatives who had expressed reservations about allocating additional resources for the performance of those new functions that DPI had always assessed its requirements with the utmost seriousness and kept them to the minimum. It was his constant endeavour to use DPI resources as efficiently as possible in view of the climate of general financial stringency throughout the world. He would give a more detailed explanation on that point when the financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.15 were considered in the Fifth Committee.

40. Preliminary work had already been started in accordance with the recommendations of the draft resolutions, so that when they were approved by the General Assembly, DPI would be in a position to implement them without delay. DPI looked forward to submitting a progress report to the next session of the Special Political Committee through the Committee on Information.

41. Mr. AMARI (Tunisia) said that, as consideration of item 67 was drawing to a close, he wished to make a statement about the third conference of the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies at Tunis in November 1982. His country had welcomed to that meeting representatives from the news agencies of some 60 non-aligned countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe and observers from several international and regional organizations, notably the United Nations, UNESCO and the federations of Arab, Latin American and Asian news agencies.

42. The purpose of the meeting had been to define the guidelines for a programme of action and, in particular, ways and means of guaranteeing the effectiveness of the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies which in just six years had become a prime instrument for achieving a new and more just world information and communications

(Mr. Amari, Tunisia)

order. The resultant Tunis Programme of Action emphasized the need to strengthen the news agencies of countries belonging to the Pool, to continue action to establish an integrated network of communications among non-aligned countries and to improve the quality and content of the news carried by the Pool.

43. As a founder of the non-aligned movement, his country had endeavoured to enable the Pool to reach full operational capacity. The Tunis Afrique Presse agency, in the person of its Director-General, would preside over the Pool for the next three years, and the new momentum generated by the Tunis Programme of Action would certainly hasten the achievement of a new world information and communications order.

AGENDA ITEM 66: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/416 and Add.1; A/SPC/37/3; A/SPC/37/L.36 and L.37)

44. Mr. HANSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the ten States members of the European Community, said that the Ten welcomed the interest shown in the initiative launched by General Assembly resolution 36/148 and strongly supported draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.36, whose principal aim was to enlarge the Group of Governmental Experts and enable it to start work as soon as possible.

45. The Ten also welcomed the opportunity provided by the debate to discuss ways in which the international community could co-operate to avert new flows of refugees. In their view, it should not acquiesce in the existence of refugees as an inevitable feature of an imperfect world, and the Group of Governmental Experts should undertake its review as soon as possible. The Ten regarded the institutions and instruments already operating in the humanitarian field as essential to the work of helping the millions of refugees suffering hardship and forced to live in unacceptable conditions. In particular, they wished to commend the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and his staff to relieve the suffering of refugees in all parts of the world.

46. The States members of the European Community did not intend to use the occasion of the debate to apportion blame for refugee situations which had already occurred. They hoped that the current discussions and the work to be undertaken would focus attention on the urgency of the refugee question and produce constructive suggestions on how to eliminate or reduce future flows of refugees. Fulfilment of that task would contribute to the strengthening of international peace and stability. The Ten therefore hoped that the current item would not be a cause of controversy and that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

47. Over the years, the world community had laid down rules which should govern international behaviour. There were many instruments, including the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on human rights, which contained provisions relevant to the question of averting massive new flows of refugees. It was to be hoped that the adoption of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.36 would be a further step in the direction of the fuller observance of those rules of international conduct.

48. Mr. CHUA (Singapore) said that, despite the 12 million refugees in the world, compassion fatigue was understandably growing in the first asylum and resettlement countries. The residual presence of refugees in the first asylum countries, their unending applications to resettlement countries and new large-scale flows of refugees had imposed enormous strains on the international community, especially the developing countries, and had affected relations between first asylum and resettlement countries and among countries of the same region.

49. In order to avert new flows of refugees, it was essential to understand the underlying causes of the refugee problem. First of all, according to international conventions, a refugee was a person fleeing from persecution. There were two possible reasons for massive refugee flows. The first was that conditions in the home country were intolerable; people were discriminated against and deprived of their means of livelihood, and their very lives were endangered. In that connection, the recent Study on Human Rights and Massive Exoduses by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights analysed the link between violations of human rights and mass exoduses of refugees. Secondly, there were the victims of national and regional instability, including foreign military intervention and occupation.

50. Consequently, to ensure that Governments did not act in ways which produced refugees, they must abide by their international responsibility to observe the Charter, respect fundamental human rights, maintain a policy of good neighbourliness, respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, adopt and implement just and non-discriminatory policies towards all communities within their jurisdiction and use existing means of peaceful settlement of disputes between States.

51. However, experience had shown that the international community had no effective means of forcing States to respect their international responsibility but only international intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies which strove to alleviate the suffering of refugees. For instance, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner had been promoting three possible solutions to the refugee problem: voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement in another country. Those activities were essentially curative, and prevention was more important. As the refugee problem was man-made, the international community must tackle the root causes. Too much emphasis had been placed on the provision of relief. International pressure should be maintained on those Governments which were responsible for the massive flows of refugees. If they continued to disregard their international responsibilities, many countries would have an intolerable burden that was not of their own making. Pending durable and long-term solutions to the refugee problem, all States should continue to support the principle of international solidarity and burden-sharing in granting asylum and resettlement. As a first port of call, Singapore continued to provide shelter and transit facilities for the refugees from Indo-China, although land and population pressure restricted large-scale resettlement in Singapore itself. All first-port-of-call countries in South-East Asia were concerned with the decrease in the rate of resettlement of Indo-Chinese refugees in third countries and called upon the resettlement countries to continue and expedite their intake.

(Mr. Chua, Singapore)

52. It was time for first asylum and resettlement countries to re-examine their approach to the refugee problem. His delegation was concerned at the delay in the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts. In view of the gravity of the refugee problem, States Members of the United Nations must put aside considerations of numerical representation so that the Group could be established before the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly. In undertaking its comprehensive review of the refugee problem, the Group should consult UNHCR in order to avoid duplication of work.

53. In that connection, his delegation expressed support for draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.36.

54. Mrs. NOWOTNY (Austria) said that there were currently more refugees in the world than at any other time in modern history. The efforts of the international community had so far been concentrated on alleviating their tragic plight and providing humanitarian assistance. There was, however, an increasing awareness that immigration and refugee issues would prove to be among the most important and troubling world problems in the coming decades. The magnitude of international migration was directly related to the definition and principle of modern nation States and relations between them.

55. Austria had therefore welcomed the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an item on a phenomenon which called for intense international co-operation under the leadership of the United Nations. Austria's positive response was also expressed in its response to General Assembly resolution 35/124 (A/36/582) which was based on Austria's traditional policy in refugee questions of acting as a country of first asylum as well as on its unconditional commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights as a prerequisite for peace, development, security and the reduction of tension. Full respect for human rights could greatly contribute to the elimination of mass exoduses, which recent history had shown were often caused by racial discrimination, religious intolerance and the denial of basic rights.

56. The economic causes of a mass exodus could not be overlooked. Since many recipient countries were often poor countries themselves, a massive influx of refugees could place an additional burden on their already struggling economies and easily endanger social and political structures.

57. Austria had welcomed the decision at the preceding session of the General Assembly to set up a Group of Governmental Experts to undertake an in-depth study of the problem and had nominated a suitable candidate to participate in that Group. It was regrettable that such a delay had occurred in the constitution of the Group and that valuable time had been lost. Austria supported the proposed enlargement of the Group and hoped that that would remove the obstacles which had prevented its establishment. Austria also approved of the emphasis placed, in paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.36, on the need for a future-oriented approach to the problem in the expert group. That Group should pay special attention to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its

(Mrs. Nowotny, Austria)

1967 Protocol, which constituted the most important humanitarian instruments drawn up by the United Nations on that subject. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on human rights, the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States and the Charter itself would also be relevant. Due regard should also be given to international instruments at the regional level pertaining to the refugees and to asylum.

58. The existing international machinery should be examined to ensure its adequacy for the task of averting mass exodus and handling it when it occurred, in order to see whether there were possibilities for streamlining and adapting it, taking due account of the prerogatives of the Security Council as well as the wide possibilities of the good offices of the Secretary-General.

59. Mr. KOR (Democratic Kampuchea) recalled that General Assembly resolutions 25/124 and 36/148 had strongly condemned policies and practices of oppressive and racist régimes, as well as aggression, colonialism, apartheid, alien domination, foreign intervention and occupation, which were among the root causes of new and massive flows of refugees. The principle cause of such refugee flows was violations of the Charter, of the principles governing international relations and of the right of peoples to self-determination. Massive refugee flows not only affected the domestic order and stability of receiving countries but also jeopardized regional and international peace and security.

60. At the thirty-third session of the Executive Committee of UNHCR held in October 1982, numerous delegations had stressed that the marked increase in the number of refugees in the world was the result of military aggression and occupation. Developments in the international situation over the past year showed that, far from being resolved, the situation of countries that were victims of wars of aggression, invasion and occupation had grown worse. The continuing conflict and instability was simply increasing refugee flows.

61. In Afghanistan, the Soviet invasion and occupation had forced 3 million people to flee their villages and become refugees in their own country. A further 3 million had taken refuge in Pakistan, where there were now more than 230 refugee camps, the largest concentration of refugees in the world. Approximately 1 million Afghans had taken refuge in Iran. In the Middle East, the situation of the 2 million Palestinian refugees had been aggravated by the foreign occupation of Lebanon. The refugee problem in the Horn of Africa persisted and, in Namibia, continuing illegal occupation by South Africa was aggravating the problem of refugees in Africa.

62. In South-East Asia, the repressive and expansionist policy of the Hanoi Government towards Laos had provoked an exodus of Lao refugees to Thailand and several other countries of asylum. Thousands of Vietnamese "boat people" continued to flee from Viet Nam to countries of first asylum in South-East Asia. Thousands of other Vietnamese had crossed Kampuchea to take refuge in Thailand. The

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Vietnamese refugees had fled their country because of the Government's oppressive policies and because the Vietnamese economy had been destroyed by Vietnam's war of aggression and occupation in Kampuchea. Many young Vietnamese had also fled in order to avoid forced conscription and assignment to military duty in Kampuchea.

63. The Vietnamese war of aggression and invasion in Kampuchea had provoked a massive exodus of Kampuchean refugees to Thailand. Further millions of Kampucheans had become refugees in their own country. The refugee problem created serious difficulties for Thailand, and Kampuchea and its peoples would be eternally grateful for the humanitarian assistance extended by Thailand and its people to the hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean refugees. In view of the numerous attacks launched by the Vietnamese army on refugee camps in Thailand, his delegation hoped that the study called for by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees would lead to the adoption of effective measures to prevent armed attacks on refugee camps everywhere.

64. The international community must identify the root causes of the refugee problem and find ways of compelling those who caused refugee flows to abide strictly by the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant United Nations resolutions. One means of combating the problem was to be found in the struggle which peoples and nations who were victims of aggression were waging to liberate themselves and recover their inalienable national rights. The international community must give every support to such struggles and not do anything to aid or abet the aggressors. Recent history showed that, once the political aspects of a refugee problem were resolved, the problem as a whole was resolved. In the case of Kampuchea, General Assembly resolution 37/6 had recently reaffirmed that no effective solution to the humanitarian problems could be achieved without a comprehensive political settlement of the Kampuchean conflict. The refugee problem could thus be solved only by the total and unconditional withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. Only then would the Kampuchean refugees be able to return and the entire people of Kampuchea be able to exercise their right to self-determination and independence. That done, Kampuchea would then be in a position to extend humanitarian aid to refugees from other countries.

65. His delegation reiterated its support for the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts to find ways of improving international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees and regretted that differences of opinion as to its composition had so far prevented its establishment. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Group's membership should be increased from 17 to 24 and hoped that the General Assembly would be able to settle the issue at its current session so that the Group of Experts could finally assume its functions. In that connection, his delegation was highly indignant that the country which had been responsible for the massive exodus of Kampuchean, Lao and Vietnamese refugees had had the impudence to seek membership in the Group. Morality and common sense showed that that country was in no way qualified to be a member of the Group; Viet Nam's candidature was simply a ploy to prevent the Group from taking any effective action. His delegation believed that members of the Group must be chosen from among the representatives of States which were truly concerned for the

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fate of refugees, in particular countries of asylum and States which respected the Charter and were active in trying to solve the refugee problem. In that connection, his delegation wished to express its gratitude to all receiving countries and donor countries and humanitarian organizations, in particular UNHCR, for the aid they had extended to the Kampuchean refugees. His delegation hoped that no other country would have to live through what Kampuchea had suffered and it therefore urged the adoption of measures to prevent new and massive flows of refugees. To that end, it supported draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.36 and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

66. Mr. SIKAZWE (Zambia) said that, as any increase in the already alarming world refugee population contributed to the deterioration of global peace and security, international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees was more urgent than ever.

67. It was of fundamental importance to identify the causes of the refugee problem, which included armed conflicts, foreign intervention, acts of aggression, violation of human rights, violation of the Charter and disregard of United Nations resolutions and decisions.

68. His country had first-hand experience and knowledge of the refugee problem. Since the beginning of the liberation struggle in southern Africa, Zambia had played host to thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries. While substantial numbers had returned after the independence of Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, there were still over 40,000 refugees in Zambia, and that number was likely to grow with the intensification of the liberation struggle in Namibia and South Africa.

69. A mass influx of refugees for whatever reason caused untold suffering to innocent men, women and children, as well as imposing severe economic burdens on receiving countries, which in most cases were struggling to develop. His delegation, therefore, appreciated the humanitarian efforts of the agencies in the United Nations system. The projects and programmes proposed by UNESCO (A/37/416, part III, paras. 2 and 3) were a positive contribution to international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees. The idea of establishing a Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees was also a positive step.

70. While the international community might not be able to prevent refugee problems arising out of natural disasters, it could and should prevent refugee situations of an essentially political character by finding solutions to their underlying causes. Although humanitarian assistance to refugees and the host countries must not only continue but also be increased, it must be regarded as temporary and not a substitute for permanent solutions. His delegation called upon all Member States to act in conformity with the spirit of the United Nations and to recognize the fact that refugees had the right to return to live in their homes and countries.

71. Mr. SANGSOMSAK (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that his delegation's concern at the massive flow of refugees had been demonstrated by its participation in the consensus on the adoption of General Assembly resolution 36/148 despite certain reservations about its wording. The number of refugees in the world had never been so high since the Second World War. The fundamental causes of all flows of refugees were colonialist, imperialist and expansionist policies.

72. During the past three decades, nearly 300 conflicts and wars had broken out in different parts of the world, mainly directed against sovereign States and peoples fighting to preserve their national independence and exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. It was therefore inevitable that those hostilities should provoke a massive movement of displaced persons who in most cases crossed their national frontiers to become refugees.

73. The persistence of the policy of apartheid, the continued occupation of Namibia and South African aggression against sovereign States made the African continent most affected by the exodus of refugees. In the Middle East, zionism had also forced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to become refugees in their ancestral homeland for more than 30 years and even to become victims of massacres and extermination.

74. However, despite the international community's recognition of the seriousness of the problem, there was no sign of improvement in the situation in the near future. On the contrary, growing international tension gave rise to fear of an eventual military confrontation.

75. Unfortunately, some countries had used the question of refugees for military and political ends instead of tackling its purely humanitarian aspect. The sophisticated media of those countries had made false accusations against the countries which refused to submit to their will, while at the same time painting a rosy picture of life in the West. That incitement to exodus was mainly aimed at causing economic and social chaos in the refugees' home countries and slowing up their development. Another reason for encouraging the continued flow of refugees was that they constituted a cheap means of carrying out those countries' policies of intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign States. For instance, some States financed the equipment and training of mercenaries recruited among those refugees and sent them back to their countries of origin to carry out acts of sabotage and subversion.

76. His delegation also agreed with the majority of previous speakers that one of the principal causes of the movement of refugees was the constantly increasing gap between the developing and the developed countries due to the current unjust international economic order.

77. Since the causes of the refugee problem were essentially political, its solutions must also be political. States must put an end to their policies of aggression, subversion and interference in the internal affairs of other States and adhere firmly to the principles of peaceful co-existence and peaceful settlement of international disputes.

(Mr. Sangsomsak, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

78. Action which should be taken immediately to solve the refugee problem included the total elimination of the system of apartheid, the immediate granting of independence to the Namibian people, recognition of the right to return home and to national independence of the Palestinian people and the establishment of a new international economic order.

79. Since the causes of the refugee problem were political and affected international peace and security, they should be considered only by bodies with broad political competence and recognized by the international community as a whole, namely, the General Assembly and the Security Council.

80. The humanitarian aspect of the problem had been competently dealt with by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Moreover, a number of pertinent international instruments covered all aspects of the question. The existence of those instruments and of UNHCR made his delegation feel that the establishment of a new body such as a Group of Intergovernmental Experts was unnecessary. Even if its membership was expanded and it was given the necessary mandate, it could not perform tasks which were the responsibility of existing bodies, even less obtain the desired results.

81. Part of the Lao population, comprising seven categories of persons, had left the country despite the untiring efforts of his Government to retain them so that they could participate with their compatriots in building the new Lao society. That exodus was a direct consequence of the war of aggression and destruction imposed on the people for nearly three decades. True to its policy of tolerance, the Lao Government still declared that the refugees were always welcome in their country and had taken the necessary steps to ensure their return and resettlement, despite the obstacles placed in its way by some circles which hoped to use those distressed persons to achieve their political aims. In the past few years, his country, with the help of UNHCR, had welcomed back several thousand refugees under voluntary repatriation. To that should be added nearly two thousand mountain-dwelling refugees who had returned by their own means and of their own free will. The Government had thus proved its commitment to finding permanent solutions to the refugee problem, one of which was voluntary repatriation.

82. Mr. MUSA (Somalia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that the representative of Ethiopia had made a statement at the 42nd meeting which he had presented as a statement in exercise of the right of reply. The statement in question had not been made in exercise of the right of reply, and the representative of Ethiopia had thus infringed the Committee's procedures. Care must be taken to prevent similar infringements in the future.

83. He rejected utterly the spurious allegations levelled by the Ethiopian representative at Somalia. His delegation was, of course, used to such allegations which reflected the treachery and perfidy of the Ethiopian régime. That régime was notorious for its violations of human rights and its wholesale massacre not only of

(Mr. Musa, Somalia)

Ethiopian opponents but also of Somalis and Eritreans, which had led to the massive exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries.

84. While he was loath to take issue with a statement which did not warrant serious consideration, he wished to clarify certain questions. With regard to the refugee question, his Government had supported the creation of an international committee to take a census of the refugees in Somalia. UNHCR had published the results of the census, according to which there were some 700,000 refugees receiving assistance in refugee camps in Somalia. That figure had been confirmed by an inter-agency mission that had visited Somalia and also by the Somali Government. Ethiopia, however, had done everything it could to prevent the international community, and the United Nations in particular, from channeling aid to the refugees and displaced persons in Somalia, claiming that there were no refugees in that country. At the same time, it had secured millions of dollars in aid for refugees who it alleged, had returned to Ethiopia. He was curious to know where those refugees had come from if not from Somalia. It was clear from a statement made at the current session by the representative of Sudan to the Third Committee that refugee flows into the Sudan from Ethiopia also continued unabated. While he did not feel the need to prove the reality of the refugee situation in Somalia to a country which was notorious for exporting refugees, he wished to refute certain of the Ethiopian representative's allegations, which were an insult to the countries that had donated aid to the refugees in the Horn of Africa, including Somalia. Among other things, he challenged that representative to prove that there were any Somali refugees in Ethiopia.

85. With regard to the Ethiopian representative's allegations of human rights violations, it was amazing that the representative of the current Ethiopian régime had the audacity to accuse Somalia of human rights violations. Mengistu's campaign of red terror had claimed the lives of thousands of people in Ethiopia, including children who had been tortured and killed in order to extract information from their parents. In early 1979, both The New York Times and The Observer had spoken of bodies littering the streets in Ethiopia and of the savage repression of any opposition to the Mengistu régime. No one knew how many political prisoners had been executed, and it was small wonder that the High Commissioner for Refugees had made Ethiopia the object of a special study. At the current session, the High Commissioner had referred members of the Third Committee to Secretariat documents which confirmed that seven years of military rule in Ethiopia had reduced millions to the status of displaced persons and refugees.

86. Mr. KINDE (Ethiopia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that the Somali representative had launched a smear campaign against Ethiopia to which it was beneath his dignity to reply. The Somali representative's statement had nothing to do with the question under consideration and he had not answered any of the charges levelled against the Somali Government. His right of reply had been used solely for propaganda purposes.

87. Many revolutions had taken place in the course of history and, while each of them had its own momentum, all of them had involved violence at some point or

(Mr. Kinde, Ethiopia)

other. The Ethiopian revolution must be viewed in its historical context; it was no different from any other revolution and history alone could be its judge. He wished to draw attention, however, to an article published in the Washington Post in January 1982 which had spoken of the unparalleled social changes that had taken place in Ethiopia following the revolution and the vast social programme undertaken by the revolutionary Government. There had been numerous attempts to destabilize that Government, but such attempts were doomed to failure. Faithful to Lenin's immortal precepts, the Soviet people provided disinterested aid to all newly independent countries to protect them from such destabilization. Ethiopia's revolution adhered strictly to the original precepts of scientific socialism and Ethiopia had established bonds of sincere friendship with the Soviet Union.

88. He wished also to refute some of the Somali representative's other fabrications. The Somali Government had previously claimed to be giving shelter to 2 million refugees; now it agreed that there were only 700,000. He was curious to know what had happened to the other 1,300,000. Somalia was receiving massive aid on the strength of those figures, but he wondered if the aid was being used to meet the refugees' needs or Somalia's development needs. His delegation was not opposed to the provision of aid to Somalia but it would not be used as a scapegoat so that Somalia might receive aid on false pretenses. In that connection, he wished to point out that some Ethiopians had even been abducted to Somalia and asked to engage in mercenary activities against Ethiopia.

89. Instead of lecturing others, the Somali Government should look at itself. Thousands of Somalis had fled Somalia or perished so that the present corrupt régime might remain in power. A recent report to the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate on aid to Somalia had revealed that donor agencies did not know where their food aid went to in Somalia. Often it was diverted to shops and to the military. Recent articles in the Guardian and The New York Times confirmed that food aid for the refugees in Somalia was being diverted to the army and that young men in the refugee camps were being forcibly conscripted. One hundred and fifty thousand refugees registered with UNHCR had also returned to Ethiopia. He therefore continued to challenge the refugee figures given by the Somali Government. It was his view that the "refugees" in question were Somali drought victims who had been paraded in the refugee camps for the purpose of securing aid.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.