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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 14 (b)

SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

MINORITIES

Afghanistan*, Albania*, Algeria*, Armenia*, Australia*, Austria*, Bangladesh,
Belarus*, Belgium*, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria*, Canada, Chile, Croatia*,
Cyprus*, Denmark*, Ethiopia*, Finland*, France, Germany, Greece*,
Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Ireland*, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Madagascar,
Malaysia*, Mauritius, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands*, Norway, Peru, Poland,
Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia*,
South Africa*, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden*, Switzerland*, Thailand*,
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States
of America and Uruguay*: draft resolution

2000/... Tolerance and pluralism as indivisible elements in the
promotion and protection of human rights

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, which enjoins the peoples of the United Nations to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours,

* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Recalling also that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial or religious groups,

Recalling further the relevant paragraphs of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (A/CONF.157/23),

Noting that tolerance involves a positive acceptance of diversity and that pluralism encompasses the willingness to accord equal respect to the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all individuals, without distinction based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Recognizing that tolerance and pluralism strengthen democracy, facilitate the full enjoyment of all human rights and thereby constitute a sound foundation for civil society, social harmony and peace,

Fully aware that, even at the onset of the twenty-first century, forces of aggressive nationalism, absence of religious tolerance and ethnic extremism continue to produce fresh challenges,

Noting that in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural world, no society is beyond the dangers posed by the absence of tolerance and the violence that this can breed,

Underlining the importance attached by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to States parties providing for educational measures for the teaching of the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society,

Conscious that all forms of discrimination, including on ethnic grounds, are factors that promote intolerance and infringe upon human rights and fundamental freedoms, which in turn may threaten democratic pluralism and endanger harmony, peace and stability both within States and internationally,

Convinced that the guiding principles of democratic society, such as equality, the rule of law, accountability of Government, the observance of human rights, respect for pluralism and the practice of tolerance, need to be actively promoted by the international community,

Recognizing that efforts to promote tolerance require cooperation by States, civil society and individuals,

Recognizing also that promoting a culture of tolerance through human rights education is an objective that must be advanced in all States, and that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and mechanisms of the United Nations human rights system have an important role to play in this regard,

1. Condemns unequivocally all violent acts and activities that infringe upon human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy and thereby undermine the values of tolerance and pluralism;
2. Reiterates the obligation of all States and the international community:
 - (a) To promote universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;
 - (b) To protect effectively the human rights of all persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities without any discrimination and in full equality before the law;
 - (c) To oppose all forms of discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status in order to promote tolerance and pluralism at the national and international levels and take all appropriate means towards their prevention and elimination;
 - (d) To take steps to prevent all manifestations of hatred, intolerance and acts of violence, in particular through education and dialogue;
 - (e) To promote and enhance tolerance, coexistence and harmonious relations between ethnic, religious, linguistic and other groups and ensure that the values of pluralism, respect for diversity and non-discrimination are promoted effectively;
 - (f) To foster a culture conducive to promoting and protecting human rights, fundamental freedoms and tolerance, inter alia through education leading to genuine pluralism, a positive acceptance of diversity of opinion and belief, and respect for the dignity of the human person;
3. Notes with appreciation the activities undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote the values of tolerance and pluralism and calls upon the High Commissioner and her Office to take further steps:
 - (a) To include, in the work programmes of the Office, within overall existing resources, the promotion of tolerance, where appropriate through workshops and seminars, using

mass media and non-governmental organizations, and, through its programme of advisory services and technical cooperation, to assist countries in their national programmes;

(b) To undertake, in that regard, specific educational initiatives and public-awareness activities for the promotion of tolerance and pluralism within the programmes and activities being implemented as part of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004) and the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1993-2003), and in the context of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief;

(c) To advise or assist countries, upon request, through the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation, to put in place effective safeguards, including appropriate legislation, to guarantee the full enjoyment of all human rights by all segments of their population, without discrimination of any kind;

4. Calls upon the High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office to include details of activities undertaken by the Office to implement the present resolution in her report to the Commission at its fifty-eighth session;

5. Also calls upon the relevant mechanisms of the Commission:

(a) To continue to attach the highest priority to the effective promotion, at the national and international levels, of the values of democracy, pluralism and tolerance;

(b) To further study situations and conditions that promote intolerance;

(c) To continue efforts aimed at identifying commonly accepted principles and best practice to promote tolerance and pluralism;

6. Welcomes the role of civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations working at the grass-roots level, in disseminating the importance of tolerance and pluralism through their awareness-raising activities;

7. Decides to consider this question at its fifty-eighth session under the appropriate agenda item.
