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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOBHY (Egypt)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 73: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE DECADE FOR ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/34/411; A/34/3/Add.22, A/34/357, A/34/389 and Corr.1)

AGENDA ITEM 86: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/34/357, A/34/389 and Corr.1, A/34/499)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/34/18, A/C.3/34/L.6)
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- (c) STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE SUPPRESSION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF APARTHEID (continued) (A/34/442 and Corr.1 (English only); A/C.3/34/L.5)

1. Mrs. NDUKU BOOTO (Zaire) said that her country had always condemned discrimination on the basis of race, religion or sex, and it did not regard Africa as the preserve of any particular race. There was room for all races in Africa provided that the basic rules of democracy were respected; the principle of "one man, one vote" must be applied consistently in every part of the Continent, including South Africa, which could not pass discriminatory laws that enabled one race to exploit the others. Her country was opposed to that kind of régime, which must make way for a form of government that gave each citizen the same rights and the same opportunities in life.

2. Although there was universal recognition of the fact that apartheid was a crime against humanity and a serious obstacle to international peace and security, the minority white racist régimes of southern Africa continued to dominate the peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. While the complete elimination of racial discrimination had not yet been achieved, it could be stated with confidence that that scourge would eventually be overcome because the struggle against it was a just one. It was essential that specific measures should be taken at all levels in order to achieve positive results. The international community must take concerted action in order to attain the goals of the Programme for the Decade by implementing the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

3. Her delegation hoped that a consensus could be achieved with regard to the resolutions that would be submitted on the question of racial discrimination, thus making possible a new step forward towards a better world for all.

4. Ms. MELCICKA (Czechoslovakia) said that her country had always fought racism

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(Ms. Melcicka, Czechoslovakia)

and racial discrimination, which constituted the main obstacle to the liquidation of colonialism in Africa. The situation in South Africa, the military provocations on the part of the racist régimes directed against neighbouring African States, and the hotbeds of tension in Southern Rhodesia represented a threat to international peace and security. Gross violations of human rights were committed in South Africa, a State with which a number of Western countries were maintaining normal diplomatic and economic relations. The countries and international monopolies that collaborated with South Africa shared in the responsibility for those crimes.

5. Racism likewise existed in a number of Latin American countries, in the Middle East, where a population of more than a million suffered under racist oppression in territories occupied by Israel, and in advanced capitalist States. States that declared protection of human rights to be one of their foreign policy objectives practised discrimination against their own citizens, as demonstrated by the dissemination of racist theories in their mass information media.

6. Racism and racial discrimination could be eliminated only through sincere efforts on the part of all the States concerned, and the international community must use every means at its disposal to exert pressure on those States that practised racist policies. Both the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries and the United Nations had made important contributions to the struggle against racism. A further useful contribution to the achievement of the goals of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination would be universal accession to and ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and implementation of their provisions in all States. The number of parties to those Conventions remained insufficient to achieve the implementation of the goals of the Decade.

7. Her country's Constitution specifically emphasized that all citizens were guaranteed equality, regardless of their nationality and race, and in everyday life in Czechoslovakia there were no cases of racial discrimination. Czechoslovakia was greatly interested in the continued development of co-operation with United Nations bodies in the struggle against racism. The previous year, the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had considered her country's fifth periodic report, and its sixth report to that Committee was in preparation.

8. Her country supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/3 on implementation of the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination because it felt that in the second half of the Decade the United Nations must accelerate its efforts to attain the Decade's objectives.

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9. Mrs. DINÇMEN (Turkey) said that the eradication of racism, racial discrimination and apartheid had always been one of the most important questions confronting the United Nations. The racist régime in South Africa remained a dangerous obstacle to the liberation process in southern Africa as a whole, and increased pressure on the Government of South Africa was urgent if a violent racial confrontation that would endanger peace and security in that region was to be avoided. At the same time, the international community should increase its efforts to assist the oppressed people of southern Africa.

10. Her country was determined to develop its relations with the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the Patriotic Front and it wished to reiterate its support for them in their struggle. Her Government had, moreover, recently decided to extend humanitarian aid to those liberation movements.

11. An evaluation of the results of the first half of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination showed that the United Nations could make a substantial contribution to achieving the objectives of the Decade. The World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the regional seminar on recourse procedures had been exceedingly useful. Similarly, the action relating to the role of the media in combating racial prejudice taken by UNESCO during its twentieth General Conference was a significant development. In that connexion, her delegation welcomed the establishment of the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities.

12. Discriminatory policies towards migrant workers and their families were of particular concern to her delegation, and it hoped that receiving countries would take specific steps to implement the recommendations of the World Conference, particularly those included in paragraphs 12, 13 and 14 of its Programme of Action (A/33/262). Her delegation was confident that the Working Group of the Whole, established by the Economic and Social Council to assist in evaluating the activities of the Decade, would devote particular attention to that question.

13. The report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on activities for the second half of the Decade (E/1979/15) contained some very useful suggestions. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had a major role to play in the preparation of the studies mentioned in paragraphs 15 and 22 of the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference. Lastly, during the second half of the Decade increased efforts should be made to give the Programme for the Decade further impetus by disseminating information on activities to be undertaken by the United Nations and related bodies.

14. Mr. KIPLAGAT (Kenya) said that his country's Constitution contained clauses to protect individuals against racial discrimination. On attaining independence, his country had dismantled racial institutions and successfully embarked on a process of education aimed at creating harmonious relationships between peoples of different racial backgrounds.

(Mr. Kiplangat, Kenya)

15. It was encouraging that the Commonwealth leaders had taken a clear stand against racism and racial discrimination in the declaration they had made during their recent summit meeting at Lusaka. His delegation wished to join those who had called upon the international community to devote particular attention to southern Africa.

16. His delegation endorsed the proposals submitted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Furthermore, as a follow-up to the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination it would like to see a programme of regional and national conferences on racism and racial discrimination. It would also welcome a discussion on the follow-up to the Decade as well as discussion on the scope of the programme to be undertaken. Efforts should be made to co-ordinate the programmes of the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations aimed at the eradication of racism.

17. Mrs. BIHI (Somalia) said that since the mid-point of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had been passed the need to accelerate efforts to achieve the goals of the Decade had become increasingly urgent. Racist attitudes and practices continued to undermine the basic human rights of millions, while damaging the internal stability of States and threatening international peace and security, and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination must therefore be given high priority. The world community must show a new solidarity in isolating the racist régimes of southern Africa and in supporting the liberation struggles of the people of Azania, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The Palestinian people were also the victims of doctrines and policies of racial superiority and exclusiveness, and the situation in the Middle East would continue to be a major threat to world peace until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were restored. In that context her delegation wished to emphasize the legitimacy of the armed struggle of the peoples of Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia and Palestine. It also supported the liberation struggle of the people of Western Somalia and Eritrea. The colonial Ethiopian régime had been actively assisted in its indiscriminate killings and violation of the rights of the peoples of the Horn of Africa by Cuban mercenaries, surrogates of one of the super-Powers. Cuba and the forces allied with it were continuing to provide not only troops but also large amounts of sophisticated weaponry to the Addis Ababa régime.

18. Racism had also manifested itself in the polarization of national communities and in the subhuman conditions under which migrant workers and immigrant communities often lived. Racial discrimination bore heavily on the most vulnerable members of society, whose special needs should be of particular concern in the current International Year of the Child and during the United Nations Decade for Women.

19. Racist practices were often maintained in order to protect vested interests, as demonstrated by the collaboration of South Africa's trading partners in the entrenchment of apartheid, Israel's deliberate establishment of close economic and

(Mrs. Bihi, Somalia)

military ties with the apartheid régime, and the concern of multinational and national corporations for financial profit.

20. There was much that could be done immediately if the necessary political will could be mobilized. Member States could make the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination fully effective by universal participation, thus ensuring that the elimination of racial discrimination became an imperative norm of the international community, taking precedence over such competing rights as freedom of action, association or speech. It was also to be hoped that States would increasingly adopt the measures called for by the Convention to deal with offences having their basis in racism. In that connexion, she said that her country had provided guarantees in its Constitution against racial discrimination. It was also to be hoped that many more States would become parties to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, since the strengthening of that Convention would be a valuable contribution to the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and would enable the international community to consider establishing an international penal tribunal to deal with crimes of the dimension of apartheid. Education and information services were also important weapons in the struggle against racism and they should be widely used by the organizations of the United Nations system and by Governments.

21. In dealing with international instruments designed to put into practice declared principles concerning racism, racial discrimination and apartheid, it was important that the international community should not become so involved with form that it became indifferent to substance, in other words, the physical and mental suffering of millions of individuals.

22. Mr. OULD SIDI AHMED VALL (Mauritania) said that the policies of the racist régimes of southern Africa, and of Israel in the occupied Arab territories, were a matter of growing concern for the entire international community. However, in southern Africa the apartheid régime had become increasingly isolated and all its attempts to deceive the international community could not hide the real situation of the black population. Meanwhile, the Patriotic Front was gaining strength in Zimbabwe.

23. His delegation would support Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/3 because it felt that a determined effort was required in order to make a success of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. Particular attention must be devoted to implementation of the Programme for the Decade and of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination with a view to complete isolation of the racist régimes. The Security Council must assume its responsibilities and take appropriate measures in that regard.

24. His delegation supported the proposal that regional and international seminars, round-table discussions and colloquies should be held in order to increase awareness of racism and racial discrimination. Similarly, each of the specialized agencies and the various functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council must consider the implications of racism and racial discrimination within the context of its area of competence and submit appropriate recommendations. He wished to commend the role played by UNESCO in that connexion.

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25. Mr. OBADI (Democratic Yemen) said that the continued existence of racial discrimination in Azania, Zimbabwe, Namibia and occupied Palestine was a matter of serious concern. The régimes oppressing the peoples of those countries would not have been able to continue their policies of apartheid and racial discrimination had it not been for the economic, political and military assistance they received from the imperialist countries and the transnational corporations. The countries that supported the racist régimes must assume their responsibilities and put an end to their dealings with those régimes. They must adhere to the United Nations resolutions that upheld the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and recognized the right of that people to exercise self-determination and establish an independent State in Palestine. Such countries must also comply with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which upheld the right to self-determination of the peoples of Azania, Zimbabwe and Namibia and of other peoples still under the yoke of imperialism. The time had come for effective and realistic action to stop the racist and apartheid régimes from oppressing those whose only crime was to demand the application of justice and the right to live in peace in their own territories.

26. The Sixth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in Havana the previous month had condemned Israel's continued usurpation of Palestine and its refusal to recognize the national and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; it had reaffirmed General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX) stating that zionism was a form of racism; and it had expressed its support for the peoples of southern Africa and demanded an end to all types of imperialism, colonialism, racism, racial discrimination and apartheid.

27. The elimination of racism had indeed become a burning issue, for the list of innocent victims was increasing daily. Statements of intent by the imperialist countries and the adoption of resolutions were therefore no longer sufficient. Active measures must be taken against the criminal policy of the racist régimes, which was based on oppression and terrorism. The imperialist countries must cease providing them with weapons.

28. Since its own accession to independence, his country had continued to struggle against discrimination. It supported the peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe, Azania and Puerto Rico in their heroic struggle against colonialist oppression. Its support of national liberation movements was in accordance with the stipulations of United Nations resolutions and the United Nations Charter. Democratic Yemen had been one of the first countries to accede to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. His Government would support any positive resolution that included the following points: an unequivocal condemnation of racism, racial discrimination and apartheid in all its forms; a statement of full support to national liberation movements; a reaffirmation of the significant role and moral authority of General Assembly resolutions on racism, racial discrimination and apartheid; a condemnation of any assistance given to racist régimes and a demand for its cessation, in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

29. Mr. KAMBIA (Togo) said that his delegation attached great importance to the two items under consideration since racism and racial discrimination had the potential for negating mankind's achievements and frustrating all development efforts. There was no racial discrimination of any kind in Togo, and its domestic policy was based on strict respect for the principle of equality among all individuals without any discrimination on grounds of sex, religion or ethnic origin. Urban and rural inhabitants had the same rights before the law.

30. The Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination was more than half over, yet despite the efforts made by the international community, the total eradication of racism, racial discrimination and the hateful policy of apartheid was not yet in sight. Ignoring the indignant protests of the international community and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, the shameful régime of South Africa and the illegal régime of Rhodesia were continuing to perpetrate crimes against humanity in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe and had institutionalized racism and racial discrimination in those countries. Millions of black inhabitants were being deprived of their most elementary rights to education, health and nutrition and were being constantly subjected to arbitrary detention, torture and murder. In order to put an end to that situation, the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly must be implemented by all Member States, and economic sanctions against the South African and Southern Rhodesian régimes must be applied. There was no point in condemning racism, racial discrimination and apartheid while at the same time maintaining relations of close co-operation with the régimes which practised them. Togo, for its part, maintained no relations of any kind with South Africa and had many times condemned the policy of racial segregation and apartheid which negated democracy and human rights. It would continue to work tirelessly with all like-minded States for the final elimination of racism and all forms of racial discrimination. In 1979, the International Year of the Child, it was more than ever necessary to think of the children who were innocent victims of racial discrimination and apartheid. Togo expressed appreciation of the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Special Committee Against Apartheid and assured them of its total and continuing support.

31. Mr. AZIZ (Afghanistan) said that the contention that some people were inherently inferior because of their race had long been used as a convenient rationalization for colonial and imperialist thinking, from the time of the Greeks in the fourth century B. C. to modern times. Racial prejudice, whatever its origin, had at times become institutionalized as a part of certain cultures and had frequently persisted even after the circumstances giving rise to it had changed. It always stemmed from ethnocentrism, which was basically a legacy of colonialism: colonial countries and settlers, equating race, civilization and culture with the European varieties, regarded the physical characteristics, traditions and culture of the colonized nations as depraved and without value. The policy of apartheid in Africa, for instance, was not a new phenomenon but an affirmation of primordial loyalties which had been introduced to southern Africa 300 years earlier.

(Mr. Aziz, Afghanistan)

32. Although a majority of States agreed that the vestiges of colonialism must be eradicated, mere agreement on such a serious matter was not sufficient. Inaction on that grave issue of social and political injustice and silence on the part of some Members only served to strengthen the tyranny of the minority. Other Members were actively collaborating with the racist régimes: it had become clear that racism and apartheid in southern Africa were not simply an inhuman policy of white settlers but an institution strengthened by an international military, economic and political network. His Government reiterated its call for the immediate cessation of collaboration of any kind with the racist régimes. It reaffirmed its support for the establishment of majority rule in Azania, Zimbabwe and Namibia and its solidarity with the African National Council in South Africa, with SWAPO in Namibia and with the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe, all struggling against extreme odds for the liberation of their people from oppressive alien rule. The recent bombings of the front-line States were an indication of the unwillingness of the racist régimes to agree to a negotiated settlement. No formula could be reached for the eradication of racism and apartheid in southern Africa without the participation of the genuine representatives of the people of the region.

33. Mrs. de ARANA (Peru) said that the items under consideration concerned the most basic right of peoples, the right to equality. The reports of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (A/34/18) and of the Economic and Social Council (A/34/357) showed that the situation in southern Africa continued to be critical and to threaten international peace and security. The racist régimes there were intensifying their brutal exploitation, oppression and persecution of the black majority in order to preserve the white majority's privileges. Of all forms of racial discrimination, none was so odious as the institutionalized racism of the apartheid system. Despite the indignant world reaction against them, the racist régimes in southern Africa were continuing to carry on their aberrant policies - with increasing economic and other assistance from certain influential international sectors - because racism and apartheid were directly linked to another even greater evil: the economic exploitation of man by man. Hence the establishment of a new international economic order and the right of South African blacks to live with dignity in their own country together represented one fundamental question that must be faced courageously and honestly.

34. Peru, a proudly multiracial country, categorically rejected any theory or practice based on racism and racial discrimination in any of its forms, and that was reflected in its Constitution and legislation. It attached great importance to the programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. It had taken an active part in the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and was an active member of the Special Committee against Apartheid. Her country's support for the right of peoples to determine their political status freely and to shape their economic, social and cultural development in their own interest was thus a matter of principle. The exercise of that right was closely bound up with the struggle against colonialism, racism and apartheid and with political and economic independence and the guarantee of the effective exercise of human rights.

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(Mrs. de Arana, Peru)

35. The growing number of countries which had acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid included Peru, which appealed to the countries that had not yet ratified or acceded to the Conventions to do so, since it believed that their universal implementation was essential to the achievement of the objectives of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. It was to be hoped that the racist régimes of southern Africa would thus be led to abandon an untenable position and participate in creating nations that were truly free, sovereign and egalitarian.

36. Miss BIKE (Gabon) said that her delegation strongly condemned the policies of apartheid, racism and racial discrimination in southern Africa, in the Middle East, and wherever else people were oppressed because of their race. The fact that her country had not yet ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination did not in any way imply her Government's approval of the practice of racism and racial discrimination, denounced on several occasions at the United Nations by its representatives. She was pleased to announce that her Government would accede to that Convention in the course of the current General Assembly.

37. The people of the modern world must move forward together and abandon the old concept of differences based on colour. For its part, Gabon practised no discrimination of any sort: the 42 ethnic groups in Gabon lived together on good terms, and women as well as men were represented in all sectors of activity. The success of the struggle against racial discrimination and apartheid depended on the political will and efforts of each of the Member States; if they demonstrated that will and made the requisite efforts, it might be possible to achieve the common objective by the end of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

38. Mrs. SEMICHI (Algeria) said that an intensive struggle by the international community was needed to end one of the most extreme forms of human rights violations, the racism which existed throughout the world but was manifested in its most repugnant form in southern Africa. The optimistic outlook prevailing at the time of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 3057 (XXVIII) inaugurating the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had gradually become darker as the number of victims of racism in its many forms increased. The apartheid régime in South Africa, flouting the decisions of the General Assembly, was ruthlessly oppressing and massacring the indigenous population and confining it to the infamous bantustans. That defiance would not have been possible if the régime had not been encouraged by the unreserved support which most Western countries continued to give it in the form of economic, military or other collaboration.

39. The illegal occupation of Namibia by that same racist minority régime perpetuated South African domination over that territory, whose protection had been the direct responsibility of the United Nations since 1966. Nevertheless, the Namibian people, mobilized behind SWAPO, their sole authentic representative, were continuing to fight for the recovery of their inalienable rights.

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(Mrs. Semichi, Algeria)

40. The unavowed apartheid prevailing in Zimbabwe continued to be a source of concern for African nations and for the international community, despite the many efforts to put an end to the oppressive practices of that racist régime, which was bent on serving the interests of the white minority and dangerously intensifying its aggressive policy against the neighbouring front-line countries, as evidenced by the recent attacks against Mozambique, Zambia and Angola.

41. The situation in the Middle East was similar. There the Zionist régime illegally occupied Palestinian territory and pursued a policy of oppression that was based on a theory of ethnic ascendancy and pseudo-religious considerations. Because of that racial policy it refused to recognize the existence of the Palestinian people, whose sole representative was the PLO, and it was depriving them of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence. The World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, in its Declaration and its Programme of Action, which had been approved by the General Assembly at its thirty-third session, had noted the similarity between the policies of the Zionist régime and those of the racist régimes in southern Africa, and the ties between the Zionist régime and South Africa.

42. In other countries there were more subtle forms of racial discrimination, the laws against which were not always strictly applied. The most striking example was the situation of migrant workers, which the Committee would consider at a later stage.

43. Considering the future realistically, however, it could be said that certain efforts undertaken by the international community were preparing the way for the solution of the major problems. One positive step had been the holding of the World Conference and the action it had proposed to combat racism. On the basis of the work of the Conference, which had been guided by the ideas embodied in the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the Committee could consider a number of specific activities to be undertaken during the remaining years of the Decade.

44. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) had made major contributions to the implementation of the Programme for the Decade. Its latest report (A/34/18), however, contained an error in paragraph 507 which should be noted so as to avoid any ambiguity as to the actual role assigned to that Committee: the five-year programme of activities to which reference was made in that paragraph was still the subject of consultations and had not been recommended for adoption by the General Assembly.

45. In conclusion she said that her delegation welcomed the close co-operation between CERD and UNESCO and hoped that it would continue.

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46. Mrs. OLSEN-HAGEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the struggle against racial discrimination, racist attitudes and apartheid was one of the most important challenges of the age and required unanimous and joint efforts by the entire international community. The Nordic Ministers for Foreign Affairs at their meeting in Reykjavik in August 1979 had reiterated their condemnation of the apartheid régime's oppression of the majority of the South African population and noted that there had been no real change in the policy of apartheid. International pressure on South Africa must be intensified and made more effective with a view to the abolition of the apartheid system. The Nordic countries would continue to co-operate in the implementation of measures against South Africa, and considered that it was of vital importance to muster broader international support, particularly within the United Nations, for effective measures against that country.

47. The Nordic delegations were gratified that 104 States had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and considered that the States which had not yet acceded to the Convention should be encouraged to do so. They wished to express their appreciation of the very valuable work done by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its nineteenth and twentieth sessions, and welcomed its efforts to streamline its work, and the establishment of a working group for that purpose, the changes would naturally have to be based on existing guidelines and established practice. They felt it was important that in its dialogue with the reporting States that the Committee shall consider not only the legal and constitutional situation in regard to racial discrimination but also the de facto situation. That broader approach could perhaps be better reflected in the questionnaire used by CERD. The Nordic countries supported the suggestion that States could extend invitations to CERD to hold sessions in different regions, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/140, in order to increase awareness of and interest in its activities. Such an arrangement must, however, be seen as an exception to the general principle that meetings of United Nations bodies should take place at the permanent facilities of the United Nations.

48. The Nordic countries had noted with particular interest the dialogues between CERD and a number of States parties to the Convention concerning the position of indigenous populations in modern societies. In dealing with that complex question, CERD had shown support for the right of such peoples to maintain their traditional economic and cultural structures, including their own languages, if they chose to do so. The special problems of indigenous peoples were being given increased attention in other international organs as well, and the Nordic Governments were prepared to participate in all sincere international efforts to prevent discrimination against such peoples. The Nordic Ministers for Foreign Affairs were considering possibilities for closer Nordic co-operation in safeguarding the interests of indigenous peoples.

49. Miss SOWE (Gambia) said that her delegation attached high priority to the items under discussion; the history of the world had been characterized by the struggle to achieve respect for human rights and human dignity. It was the task of the international community to ensure that human dignity was maintained and

(Miss Sowe, Gambia)

respected, and to curb the exercise of arbitrary power and indiscriminate authority in the interests of peace and justice. The Gambia was committed to the quest for peace, friendship and justice, but believed that those objectives could not be achieved while odious methods of degrading human beings were being perpetrated in various parts of the world. Thus, her Government had consistently associated itself with the struggle to safeguard the fundamental rights of the individual, whether in relation to apartheid, colonialism, or the search for a just international economic system. The Gambia had a sound record where the observance of human rights was concerned: its Constitution guaranteed freedom and justice to every individual irrespective of his race, religion or social status, and that was the firm philosophical base in which the Government's policy was rooted. The Gambia believed that a country that was guilty of despicable crimes against humanity could not speak out in support of the universal observance of human rights.

50. The Gambia had a very constructive commitment to the fundamental rights of all individuals to life, liberty and the personal freedoms that were the common heritage of the peoples of the world and to respect for human dignity and equal rights. It was not sufficient to denounce violations of human rights; each State had the moral and humanitarian obligation to ensure that specific measures were taken, individually and collectively, to eliminate all discrimination based on race, religion or social status. At the meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government at Lusaka in August 1979, the Gambia's proposal for the establishment of a commonwealth human rights commission had been approved in principle; the commission would not only discuss the problem of human rights but would also investigate allegations of violations of human rights in any part of the Commonwealth and bring to the attention of heads of Governments acts which revealed a consistent pattern of gross and reliably attested violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Gambia hoped that that commission would soon be established, and was glad that the Organization of African Unity was taking specific steps in the same direction.

51. Institutionalized racism and racial prejudice were unpardonable violations of human rights and the intensification of the odious system of apartheid in southern Africa was cause for deep concern. The existence of such criminal activities was an insult to human conscience, and they must be eliminated and their perpetrators punished. The Gambia fully supported the work that was being done by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which, it believed, was one of the most effective United Nations bodies in the field of human rights. The Gambia had recently acceded to the multilateral conventions relating to racism and racial discrimination and it would make it its duty to ensure that effective measures were taken at the national level towards their fullest implementation.

52. Mr. AL-JABIRI (Iraq) said that the problem of racism and racial discrimination continued to constitute an obstacle to the progress of mankind which had established the United Nations in the hope of achieving a new era of tolerance, justice and peace, as called for in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, without any discrimination on the basis of colour, origin, language or religion. Despite all the difficulties it had encountered, the United Nations had historic achievements to its credit in promoting human dignity and the

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(Mr. Al-Jabiri, Iraq)

legitimate aspirations of the individual. The International Covenants on human rights clearly laid down the right of all peoples to self-determination and freedom and to the pursuit of their economic, social and cultural development. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination had played a major role in the struggle of the oppressed peoples to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

53. Racism, of whatever kind, was a mistaken principle which was contrary to human dignity and individual and national aspirations; it was based on a concept of racial superiority by virtue of which the white race supposedly had a sacred duty to settle in lands belonging to other peoples and exploit their human and natural potential. The invasions by European settlers were similar in nature, whether they took the form of colonialism in Africa and Asia, occupation in South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia or colonialist settlement in Palestine. The invaders continued to assist each other and to find pretexts for persisting in the practices of racism, settlement and colonialism, even when they were forced to relinquish some lands, and their unjust daily practices were a denial of all human values. A review of the actions of the racist Government in South Africa, of the Smith régime in Southern Rhodesia, of its successor, which continued to implement the same policy despite changes of form, and of Israeli practices in occupied Palestine revealed the organic link between all those racist régimes. The brutal methods used to suppress the struggle of the peoples in southern Africa were similar to those used by the Zionist entity in occupied Palestine. The experiences of the front-line States in Africa, including the armed invasion of Mozambique and the confrontations with Angola and Zambia, were very similar to the experiences of the Arab front-line States faced with the intransigence and arrogance of the Israeli enemy and the occupation of southern Lebanon, Palestine, the Golan Heights and parts of Egypt, despite the submission of the Egyptian leader to Israel's conditions, in disregard of his Arab nationality and his international duty. The difficulties encountered by SWAPO were the same as those which confronted the PLO - both of them organizations which genuinely represented the legitimate ambitions of the peoples of the countries concerned. The weapons used against those peoples were the same, whether in Palestine or southern Africa, and the bullets used to kill innocent people in both those regions came from the same factories in the United States, Israel and Europe.

54. In reviewing the activities of the United Nations, it was saddening to note that racist practices continued and racist aggression was increasing, despite the large number of countries which had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Countries could be judged only by their daily practice in implementing the International Convention. If military, economic and political co-operation between Israel and South Africa continued, as described in the report of the Special Committee against Apartheid, it could not be expected that Israel and its allies would implement any of the provisions of the Convention or respect their legal commitments under that instrument. The increasingly close relations between South Africa and Israel were arousing the indignation of the world. In February 1978 the South African Government had made available to the Zionist entity a loan of \$2,000 million. On a visit to South

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Africa in February 1978, the Israeli Minister of Finance had expressed satisfaction at the good relations between the two countries. On his visit to Johannesburg in 1968, the Israeli Prime Minister had spoken of Israel's desire to co-operate with its allies in South Africa and Rhodesia, since those countries were also part of the Western world. An article in The Economist in November 1978 had described a request to the Israeli Government at the beginning of 1975 to send troops to Angola to join South African forces in fighting against the popular movements, and Israel's promise to supply South Africa with military and other equipment.

55. Information was available about the relations of Israel with the former South Vietnamese régime and Moshe Dayan's visit to Saigon, and about Israel's military and political co-operation with the Somoza régime in Nicaragua. The weapons which Israel had supplied to that régime and to other régimes were being used to combat the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and prevent them from achieving victory in their fight for freedom, independence and progress. Unfortunately, the leaders of Israel were ignoring the rest of the world and refusing to admit the truth. Even the publications of the Jewish and pro-Israeli press revealed Israel's intransigence and its attempts to influence the people of the United States and their leaders, through capitalist and Jewish circles to act against their own interests.

56. It was regrettable that the achievements of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination fell so far short of its objectives. It was a matter of great concern that only 51 countries had ratified the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid; not one Western country had ratified that Convention, and those countries continued to maintain diplomatic, cultural and economic relations with the racist régime of South Africa. Many countries still did not accept article II of that Convention, and the failure to set up an international penal tribunal, in accordance with article V, greatly hindered the implementation of the Convention.

57. His delegation was satisfied with the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (A/34/18), which set forth the achievements of the nineteenth and twentieth sessions of that Committee. It also welcomed the co-operation between that Committee and UNESCO in making public opinion aware of the need to combat racism. It hoped that the Sub-Committee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities would intensify its consideration of racist conditions and their effects in the light of the definition of zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination in General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX). The Committee should consider the Israeli laws, including the law of return which enabled every Jew in the world, of whatever nationality and country of birth, to return to Israel with guaranteed Israeli nationality, and also the laws concerning the Palestinian people in the occupied territories; it should try to determine what was the legal basis for occupation and settlement and for preventing the people of Palestine from enjoying their legitimate national rights, particularly the right of return and the right to self-determination. All details of economic, military and especially nuclear collaboration between Israel and South Africa should be studied with a view to submitting a report to the Commission on Human Rights and to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

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58. A recent decree of the Iraqi Government indicated the depth of its commitment to the struggle against racist régimes, for it stipulated that countries which imported Iraqi petroleum must provide guarantees that they would not re-export it to racist régimes in Africa or occupied Palestine. Iraq had ratified the International Covenants on human rights in 1975, and article 19 of the Iraqi Constitution stipulated that all Iraqis were equal in respect of their rights and duties, without discrimination as to origin. Iraq had outlawed racism and sectarianism.

59. His delegation endorsed the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/34/3/Add.22) and its recommendations.

The meeting rose at 12.55 a.m.