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SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT
ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 29 April 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. KUROKOCHI (Japan)

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by States parties to the Covenant concerning rights covered by articles 13 to 15
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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1988 (LX)
BY STATES PARTIES TO THE COVENANT CONCERNING RIGHTS COVERED BY ARTICLES 13 TO 15
(continued)

Report of Barbados (continued) (E/1982/3/Add.24)

1. Mr. CONNELL (Barbados) thanked all the members of the Working Group for the interest they had shown in the report of Barbados. He had been very impressed by the Group's detailed examination of the reports of States parties to the Covenant and wondered why that positive side of the United Nations, exemplifying its deep interest in human welfare, was not more widely publicized.
2. He had tried in his introductory statement to convey an idea of the revolutionary role that education had played in the development of Barbados. Being a small island, with an area of 166 square miles and a population of 250,000, it had few natural resources other than the talents and the spirit of its people, and only its educational achievements over the last 200 years had enabled it to survive. In a sense, the provisions of the Covenant set minimum standards for education and culture, and the social history of Barbados showed that it had long operated above those minimum standards.
3. Under the educational system currently obtaining education was free in all government schools and the Government also paid the fees of all Barbadians attending the University of the West Indies, a regional institution to which the Government contributed. Over 60,000 students were currently receiving free education from the primary to the tertiary level. The island had 116 primary schools, 21 government secondary schools and 15 government-approved private secondary schools. There was a textbook scheme under which pupils in both types of secondary school were given their full quota of textbooks each year. Government assistance to the approved schools took the form of grants to pay the salaries of some teachers and subsidies for the inclusion of particular subjects in the curriculum. Bursaries were also awarded to some children attending those schools. Under the school meals programme, primary schoolchildren received free meals each day.
4. A national polytechnic institution, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, had been opened for both day and evening classes in January 1970. It had over 1,000 students and provided courses in the electrical, building and engineering trades, commerce, agriculture and garment-making. There was a Housecraft Centre at the Polytechnic which provided training for teachers of home economics and conducted two six-month home economics classes each year and a number of short-term classes in homemaking for both sexes.
5. Early school-leavers were catered to under the secondary school vocational programme. Over 1,100 students pursued courses in technical and vocational subjects at nine centres, while at the same time improving their literacy and computational skills. The adult education programme, sponsored by the Ministry of Education, offered academic, commercial and technical subjects at 14 centres across

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the island. Each year, close to 1,000 persons registered for those courses. Specialized schools also offered training in secretarial and commercial subjects.

6. There were a number of institutions offering tertiary education. The Barbados Community College had had a total registration of 1,697 students in the academic year 1980/81. There were faculties of liberal arts, fine arts, science, health sciences, hospitality studies and technology. The College offered a two-year course that prepared students for entrance to the University of the West Indies or other universities. The fact that Barbadian students were able to move easily from the Community College and the sixth forms of the secondary schools into universities all over the world was an indication of the standard of academic teaching they received. After five years of secondary schooling in Barbados, they could leave with a certificate that was accepted by universities in the United Kingdom, Europe and North America. Teacher training for both primary and secondary school teachers was provided at Erdiston College which had a long history of training teachers from all over the English-speaking Caribbean. For the last 70 years, Barbados had been sending many teachers and headmasters to other Caribbean countries.

7. The University of the West Indies, which had been established under the aegis of London University, had three campuses, one in Jamaica, specializing in medicine, one in Trinidad, specializing in engineering and agriculture, and one in Barbados, specializing in law. The purpose of that distribution was to enable a wide spectrum of English-speaking Caribbean countries to benefit from the University's presence, and all of them contributed to its financing. All three campuses provided a general arts education. At the Trinidad campus there was also a Foreign Relations Institute where West Indian diplomats could receive professional training. The Barbados campus accommodated students from the islands of the eastern Caribbean, Belize, the British Virgin Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica, the Bahamas, the United Kingdom, Venezuela, Martinique and Guadeloupe. Branches of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, the University's research arm, and the University's School of Education were also located in Barbados.

8. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a large general hospital owned and operated by the Government of Barbados, was a teaching hospital that formed part of the University's medical faculty. Training in nursing was also provided at the Tercentenary School of Nursing, under the aegis of the Barbados Community College. Psychiatric nurses were trained at the psychiatric hospital.

9. The Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity offered training to improve supervisory skills and those of middle and upper management in both the public and the private sectors. The Institute was a joint project designed to train small businessmen, particularly in modern commercial techniques. Codrington College, which had been in operation for more than 200 years, had surrendered its entitlement to award university degrees after the founding of the University of the West Indies in order not to compete with the University, but it continued to issue a theological degree and provided training for Anglican priests of the region.

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(Mr. Connell, Barbados)

10. A number of questions had been asked about culture in Barbados. There was a Ministry of Culture, which was responsible for the island's libraries, archives, museum and other cultural institutions and for assisting private organizations to develop cultural programmes. After the island had become independent, a concerted effort had been made to create a national identity and culture combining strands from European history and from the history of Africa, where 90 per cent of the population had their origin. Four major national festivals were held each year. The Crop Over Festival which had originated on the sugar-cane plantations where it served as a means of celebration and reward for the hard-working labourers, had been revived in 1974 and was usually held in June, at the end of the sugar cane harvest. The festivities included plantation fairs with games and contests and on Kadooment Day, which was the culmination of the festival, costumed bands took to the streets. The National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA) had been introduced in 1973. It provided a non-competitive forum for the creative and performing arts, although merit awards were given to works which reached the required standards in the various categories, namely, drama, poetry, painting, photography, music, arts and handicrafts. The Oistins Fish Festival celebrated the contribution made to the life of Barbados by the fishing town of Oistins on the south coast and the Hometown Festival on the west coast commemorated the first permanent settlement of Barbados in 1627. The museum maintained by a non-governmental association, the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, contained exhibits covering 350 years of natural, sociological, economic and political history.
11. There were a number of other cultural organizations, including the Barbados Dance Theatre Company, the Arts Council, the Writers' Guild, the Barbados Festival Choir and the Symphonia, as well as Yoruba, which had been deliberately established to implant the rich culture of Africa more firmly in the minds of Barbadians. Its activities were designed to emphasize the African heritage and its contribution to the cultural, economic and social life of Barbados.
12. Additional information had been requested on the amount of money the Government of Barbados was spending on education. To give an idea of the importance attached to education, he reported that in 1934 the educational sector had received approximately 10 per cent of total public expenditure, namely \$BDS 243,000 out of a total budget of \$BDS 2.4 million; by 1960/61, the amount had risen to about 16 per cent, or \$4.2 million out of a budget of \$34.2 million, and in 1977/78 the proportion had been about 20 per cent, or \$75 million out of a budget of \$378 million. In 1982, education had accounted for about one sixth of total national public expenditure. Ten new primary schools were currently being built under a World Bank project and there were plans to expand six secondary schools.
13. A school meals programme under which all primary school pupils who wanted them could receive hot meals had existed for some years. Although there were indications that the assistance received from the World Food Programme would shortly end, the Government was committed to continuing the programme and would meet the full annual cost, with a view to raising health standards and maximizing

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opportunities to benefit from education. Some 36,500 meals a day were at present being provided. The system of transporting school meals from centres to schools was to be rationalized for the sake of greater cost-efficiency. Thus, the right to education was being ensured in practice, since it was recognized that children could not learn if they were hungry.

14. There was a scheme for the provision of free textbooks for all students, and the Government paid the bus fares of children attending school.

15. Capital investment in education totalled approximately \$90,210,000 for the period 1979-1983, of which about \$52 million represented the cost of externally-assisted projects; external assistance amounted to about \$30 million over that period.

16. He had not been able to obtain clarification from his Government on the question of child labour but would provide official information when he received it. The report referred in that connection to chapter 41, section 29, of the Education Act, which was being superseded by a new act. Section 29 (1) of the existing law was an anachronistic survival of a statute first enacted in 1890, which had been amended a number of times, but the section in question had simply not been deleted although it was not relevant to contemporary Barbados, where there was no child labour.

17. In 1976 Barbados had had a change of government; elections were held every five years. There was no restriction on the formation of political parties, and all parties could participate in elections. Barbados had a written Constitution, and any citizen who felt that his rights had been denied him could apply to the Supreme Court, a procedure which was relatively inexpensive.

18. He had not yet received official clarification about Barbados's reservation to the Covenant, but when he did the information could be made available to the Working Group, if members so desired.

19. Barbados was a small island with scant natural resources, and sociologically the only way for the people to survive was through the educational system. For years, under colonial rule, the educational structure had been a pyramid; the Governments which had held power since independence had democratized the entire educational process.

20. Mr. SOFINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) commended the representative of Barbados for his very full replies to questions; the information he had given should have constituted the body of the written report, since it gave a very clear picture of the educational and cultural situation in Barbados. It was obvious that in many ways Barbados was more advanced than most developed countries where education was concerned; the Government understood that people must be fed before they could be educated, and also that the provisions of the Covenant represented only the minimum of what needed to be achieved.

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21. Mr. BENDIX (Denmark) said that the replies of the representative of Barbados almost constituted a separate report. It was commendable that Barbados was investing in education as a way of improving the social situation and the island's future. It was very impressive to hear about the division of labour in university education, resulting from the specialization of the three campuses; countries in other regions could learn from that example. He asked what the duration of primary education was and whether it was co-educational. The figures mentioned by the representative of Barbados suggested that the proportion of the total budget spent on education had declined somewhat in recent years; he asked whether that was so.
22. Mr. FUJII (Japan) said that the replies of the representative of Barbados made the situation in his country very much clearer. It was most encouraging that the Government was spending so high a proportion of the budget on education. He asked whether all school-age children were receiving primary education, in view of the indication that some schools were still being built.
23. Mr. CONNELL (Barbados) said he had already mentioned that there were 116 primary schools. Before the State had assumed full responsibility for education, many of them had been church schools owned by the Anglican church. In many cases the buildings were old, and they were therefore being rebuilt or extended. In other words, the school plant was being improved and expanded.
24. On the question of the number of languages taught in Barbados, both French and Spanish were taught up to university level. For some years Spanish had been the official second language of Barbados. There was a cultural centre in Barbados operated jointly by the Government of Barbados and the Government of Venezuela which provided Spanish courses to all interested persons.
25. In 1977, Barbados had been host to the regional Caribbean festival, "Carifesta", in which many English-speaking and some Spanish-speaking islands, including Cuba, had participated. Thousands of people had joined in the celebrations.
26. A question had been asked about the representation of women in the professions. The entire hospital system of Barbados would collapse without the participation of women; there were many women doctors and lawyers, and the Minister of Education was a woman. There was no restriction on the participation of women in any area of national life.
27. He did not have exact figures for expenditure on education, although he believed that currently about one sixth of the budget was being devoted to education. If there had been any decline, it was attributable to the current period of austerity, and also the fact that enormous sums had been spent on education in the past.
28. Mr. SOFINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the representative of Barbados had not explained the discrepancy between the provision that child labour was not allowed below the age of 12 and the provision that education was compulsory up to the age of 14. He also asked whether any of the indigenous population of Barbados remained and whether their culture and language was being maintained.

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29. Mr. CONNELL (Barbados) said that the term "West Indian" was a misnomer, since West Indians were not of Indian racial or cultural stock. When Barbados had first been settled in 1627 by the English, it had been uninhabited; the original inhabitants, the Arawaks, had been driven north by the Caribs, and the island had thus lain open to the depredations of colonialism. A predominantly African population had peopled the island, first as slaves until their emancipation in the mid-nineteenth century. There was therefore no indigenous population for which special measures needed to be taken.
30. There was emphatically no child labour in Barbados. Under section 29 (1) of the Education Act, the Chief Education Officer was empowered to set a minimum standard of educational qualification for working children; that power was not exercised and was an anachronistic survival from the 1890 Act. In a country with a modern educational system and almost 100 per cent literacy there was no place for child labour.
31. Mr. SOFINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that he had not said there was child labour in Barbados; he had merely noted a contradiction between two laws.
32. Mr. BENDIX (Denmark) said that, since there was compulsory primary education in Barbados, it was time for the Government to withdraw its reservation to the Covenant.
33. Mr. BURWIN (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) noted that the representative of Barbados had said that he would provide further information when he received it; the Working Group should await that information.
34. The CHAIRMAN said that the Working Group had concluded its consideration of the report of Barbados (E/1982/3/Add.24).
35. Mr. Connell (Barbados) withdrew.
- Senegal (continued) (E/1982/3/Add.17)
36. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Dia (Senegal) took a place at the table.
37. Mrs. KOLAROVA (Bulgaria) associated herself with the congratulations that had been addressed to the Government of Senegal. As other representatives had pointed out, in discussing its report the Working Group should bear in mind the problems of economic and social development faced by Senegal and that difficulties it had inherited from the era of colonial domination.
38. She asked for further clarification of the statement that national education in Senegal was African in nature. She would also like more information on all three stages of education, and on the effort being made to eliminate illiteracy. She asked what were the languages of instruction in Senegal and what were the major languages used in literary works, films and so on.

(Mrs. Kolarova, Bulgaria)

39. She had been impressed by the part of the report relating to implementation of the right to participate in cultural life, particularly where the development of the decorative arts and efforts to preserve the national heritage were concerned, and by Senegal's considerable international ties in the cultural field. She would like to know what arrangements there were for co-ordinating cultural activities at the national level, and whether there was a Ministry of Culture or any associations of creative workers such as existed in Bulgaria.

40. Mrs. de los ANGELES GIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO (Spain) said that she had been particularly struck by the importance the Government of Senegal attached to culture and to the development of artistic and craft work. She would like to know more about Daniel Sorano, after whom the national theatre company was named, and would also like more details regarding the participation of women in the professions and in education.

41. Mr. DIA (Senegal), replying to questions, said that everyone was familiar with the colonial history of the developing countries. They were young States facing enormous problems, which they were expected to have solved in 20 years while richer countries had had centuries in which to do so. The Government's plan of action for education constituted a basic blueprint for reform. Implementation of the new policy would be carried out gradually, but without undue delay, and would take full account of the need for social justice and equality. The devastating effects of the economic crisis on a country with such modest means must also be borne in mind. New educational values would be established while the Government was endeavouring to raise the standard of living, in co-operation with workers' organizations.

42. The plan amounted to a social contract between the Government and the people, based on the will to co-operate freely and to work together, while guaranteeing all social rights and obligations. The Government and teachers throughout the country would have to collaborate in promoting social justice and ensuring that priority was given to those in greatest need, such as the handicapped and the poor. All the proposed changes in the system would be submitted to a committee of teachers, through which all new criteria would be established. The function of teachers would be reassessed, with particular emphasis on the need for an awareness of family and social problems.

43. New training methods would be instituted to reflect the increased responsibilities of teachers. A system of school inspections would be established, and a restructuring of school districts would take place. A new policy of providing grants to encourage the training of technicians would be applied. Those new policies would be implemented following consultations with all the social strata and political parties. The new plan of action fully met the country's educational needs.

44. There were three levels of education in Senegal: primary, lasting six years, secondary, lasting seven years and tertiary. In 1973 the enrolment rate at the primary level for the country as a whole had been 31 per cent, although it had varied from region to region. That rate had remained constant since the mid-1960s but in view of the increase in the population it represented a tripling of the

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(Mr. Dia, Senegal)

school population over the intervening period. In 1973 the average class had consisted of 47 pupils. The numbers of children in State primary schools had risen from some 90,000 in 1960 to over 260,000 in 1974. Co-educational institutions were the norm at all levels in Senegal. In the 14 years following independence the number of primary schools had almost doubled to a total of 1,400. Between 1964 and 1974, the number of teachers working in primary education had increased from just under 4,000 to more than 7,000.

45. In the case of secondary education, the number of pupils enrolled had increased from approximately 9,500 in 1960 to over 59,000 in 1973, 72 per cent of whom had been attending public schools. The average class size in 1972 had been 39. The number of pupils in technical secondary educational establishments had risen from approximately 1,200 in 1967 to almost 4,000 in 1974.

46. With regard to higher education, he said that some 6,600 students had been attending Dakar University in 1974, of whom almost 5,000 had been Senegalese, representing a twelvefold increase since independence in 1960. In 1968, 33 per cent of Senegalese students at the university level had been enrolled in medical and science courses, a proportion which had declined to 23 per cent by 1974.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.