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STUDY ON DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

Note by the Secretary-General

Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 651 G (XXIV), the Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the Commission on Human Rights the observations and suggestions of the Greek Government concerning proposals by the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities relating to the study on discrimination in education prepared by the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission:

GREECE

The Royal Greek Government, having studied the relevant texts, wishes to make the following suggestions and observations:

1. Resolution B

The Royal Greek Government considers that it would be premature to contemplate the study and preparation of an international instrument as envisaged in paragraph (a), sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii) of resolution B before the two draft Covenants on human rights are completed and adopted. It would not be possible till then to determine the shortcomings of the Covenants in regard to this particular matter and usefully to consider ways and means of remedying them.

Greece has always given practical evidence of its adherence to the principles set forth in the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights. The efforts made by the Greek delegations at the eleventh session of the General Assembly to promote the adoption of "interim measures" clearly illustrate its desire to see those principles applied as soon as possible. Nevertheless, it considers that in the

Present instance it would be well to postpone any decision until the Covenants in question have been adopted and give their definitive form.

## 2. Resolution C

As regards the fundamental principles set forth in this resolution, the Royal Greek Government would emphasize that the problem of the education of minorities has two distinct aspects which it is not at all easy to bring into harmony.

Such education should offer members of a minority the same opportunities as those made available to the nation as a whole. Moreover, it should correspond to and be in conformity with the linguistic, national, cultural and religious traditions of the minority. Yet obligatory uniformity in education is not desirable, since it makes no provision for the specific characteristics of the minority. At the same time inequality of treatment in education is to be avoided.

Experience has shown on more than one occasion that it is difficult to combine satisfactorily these two fundamental aspects of the problem.

Analysis of the provisions of resolution C illustrates the above-mentioned difficulties more clearly:

### I. (Paragraph 4, I, (c))

"...all legislative provisions or administrative measures should be abolished ... which ... (c) establish or maintain separate educational systems or institutions for persons or distinct groups of persons."

The application of this principle, disregarding the specific spiritual traditions of a minority, could lead to pressure on the minority to assimilate itself with the majority of the population.

### II. (Paragraph 4, II)

... "Affirms that ... the following principles should be applied:

(1) Compulsory education prescribed by law should be assured both in law and in fact to every person or distinct group of persons ..."

The strict application of measures enforcing compulsory education might at times give the appearance of being a form of pressure on the members of a minority.

/...

The Royal Greek Government feels that it may be useful also to make one or two further observations on the present wording of other points in the same resolution.

The provisions concerning freedom of religious or anti-religious instruction (Paragraph 4, II, (4) and (5)) should leave no doubt as to whether tolerance will be extended to proselytizing, carried out in any particular form, for example by the provision of material assistance - a matter which the State cannot remain indifferent.

Also, the rural population and indigenous and nomadic groups (Paragraph 4, II, (6)) should not be confused with minorities. Their problems are rather of a social nature and should therefore be considered in a different context.

The Royal Greek Government in no way opposes the proposed further action on the national and international levels, provided that the above-mentioned provisions are revised in the light of the above remarks so as to give a more comprehensive and precise definition of the relevant principles.

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