

## SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 441st MEETING

Held on Friday, 3 August 1979, at 10.45 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. LAMPTEY

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES  
UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 3) (continued)

Fifth periodic report of India (CERD/C/20/Add.34)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Sibal (India) took a place at the Committee table.
2. Mrs. SIBAL (India) said that, in preparing its fifth periodic report, her Government had endeavoured to fill the various lacunae to which members had drawn attention during the Committee's consideration of the fourth report. Thus, paragraphs 26, 31 and 40 of the report contained information on the Government's efforts to apply subparagraphs (c), (a) and (b) respectively of article 4 of the Convention. Paragraphs 63 to 68 related to the measures adopted in pursuance of article 7. In response to requests for further details concerning the work of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, parts I and II of the Commissioner's report mentioned in the foot-note on page 1 of India's report had been provided to the Committee in English. Paragraphs 7 to 11 provided a brief account of the position taken by India in international forums with regard to apartheid and racial discrimination. The Government's activities to promote the indigenous cultures of the scheduled tribes were described in paragraphs 56 to 62 of the report and in annex III.
3. The Government had introduced an amendment to the Constitution with a view to giving the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the Minorities Commission (para. 44) constitutional status. In both the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, India had been seeking to gain recognition for the importance of such national institutions to the protection of human rights.
4. In April 1979, after the submission of the report, India had deposited its instruments of accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
5. Mr. TENEKIDES said that the report of India, a country which had long been in the vanguard of the struggle for human rights and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, was one of the best reports ever submitted to the Committee. He was struck by the carefully co-ordinated machinery which the country had established to safeguard human rights and ensure the application of the principle of non-discrimination.
6. It was evident from the report that India was making sincere efforts to abolish the practice of untouchability and was endeavouring to promote justice not only at the formal level but in the social and economic spheres as well. There

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(Mr. Tenekides)

were a number of highly constructive elements in the report which could serve as a standard against which to judge other reports.

7. India had distinguished itself not only by its lofty idealism but also by its eminent sense of the practical. It had consistently warned that the condemnation of racial discrimination must not become a mere theoretical exercise or annual ritual at the General Assembly, but must be put into practice.

8. The report clearly showed that the Government was fully aware that vast segments of the population were seriously disadvantaged and recognized the need to promote equality. The references to court cases in the report helped to illustrate the role played by the judicial apparatus in applying the provisions of the Convention. With regard to education, it was obviously not enough for schools to be open to all students: specific measures had to be adopted to ensure equal opportunities to all students.

9. He noted with satisfaction the Government's efforts to enlighten public opinion, since, as had often been observed, legislative and judicial action was not enough to ensure the application of the Convention.

10. While understanding the fundamental preoccupation of the Government to put an end to the practice of untouchability, he had doubts concerning the provisions in the 1955 Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 (paras. 17 ff.) relating to summary procedures and the departure in certain cases from the normal legal principle that the accused was presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

11. The constitutional provision empowering the State to impose reasonable restrictions on the right to freedom of speech and expression on certain grounds including "public order" and "incitement to offence" (para. 26) was a double-edged sword, which could easily lead to injustices. Contemporary history was replete with examples of unjust restrictions on various freedoms in the name of protecting public order.

12. He did not understand the "built-in provision" in the Indian Constitution to rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which had the effect of creating racial discrimination, as described in paragraph 27 of the report, and he requested clarification on that point.

13. He asked whether the provisions of clause (1) of section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code (para. 31) amounted to a ban on groups and organizations which propagated racist ideas and practices, and whether any such groups or organizations existed in India.

14. As to the possibility of imposing collective penalties on the inhabitants of a village or area for untouchability offences, he wondered whether the notion of collective punishment, which had been practised in Europe in the Middle Ages, was not at variance with contemporary concepts of justice.

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(Mr. Tenekides)

15. Lastly, he asked why, if India had set up such sophisticated machinery to combat racial discrimination, it had not made a declaration concerning the competence of the Committee to receive communications from individuals as provided for in article 14 of the Convention.

16. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ said that the ongoing dialogue between the Committee and the Government of India had yielded positive results, as could be seen from the quality of that country's fifth periodic report. India was a multiracial country which had been faithfully waging the struggle against racial discrimination and had made great strides in the social and legal spheres, as embodied in a constitution that safeguarded the principle of equality and provided for the punishment of untouchability offences and the elimination of untouchability itself.

17. As was well known, India had been a trail-blazer in the anti-apartheid movement, and its unswerving efforts to combat apartheid deserved the commendation of the entire international community.

18. The information contained in paragraphs 12 to 14 of the report showed that virtually every right enunciated in article 5 of the Convention was duly protected in Indian law.

19. Previous reports had contained information on the means of redress available to victims of racial discrimination. In that connexion, he noted with satisfaction that untouchability offences could be tried in the courts. It was noteworthy that the Government had, with a view to protecting the victims of untouchability offences, legislated an exception to the usual principle according to which the accused was considered innocent until proven guilty. It was essential to demonstrate in practice that the protection of the individual took precedence even over such hallowed legal principles. He would welcome additional information in future reports on application of the 1955 Protection of Civil Rights Act (para. 17) as it related to untouchability offences. He also noted with satisfaction that the amendment to that Act required State Governments to adopt measures to ensure that the persons concerned would enjoy the rights accruing from the abolition of untouchability (para. 19). The appointment of a Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes had been a positive step, and he looked forward to the provision in future reports of information on the Commissioner's work.

20. With regard to racial discrimination in general, he noted that as early as 1949, long before the entry into force of the Convention, the Government had adopted the Criminal Law (Removal of Racial Discrimination) Act with the aim of abolishing the privileges enjoyed by the nationals of certain countries in matters of criminal law and procedure (para. 27), and it had since that time been continuing its efforts to combat racial discrimination through the adoption of appropriate legislation.

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(Mr. Valencia Rodriguez)

21. Paragraphs 31 to 43 of the report described the legal, administrative and other provisions in force in India which met the Government's obligations under article 4 (a) and (b) of the Convention. The legislation in question was much more explicit in respect of subparagraph (a); however, the legislation corresponding to the provisions of paragraph (b), although not strictly following the terminology used in the Convention, had the same legal consequences. The functions of the Minorities Commission as outlined in paragraph 44 of the report were conducive to the promotion of equality and mutual respect.

22. The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were guaranteed all the rights enjoyed by other inhabitants, and the abolition of untouchability and the establishment of the scheduled castes and tribes system had been an essential step towards protection of an isolated and largely misunderstood segment of the population.

23. He welcomed the provision of information on the various court cases involving racial discrimination, which attested to the desire of the authorities to ensure the effective enjoyment of the right of equality.

24. Article 51 of the Constitution, the aim of which was the promotion of understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations (para. 63), was proof of the importance attached by the Government to article 7 of the Convention. Article 19 (2) of the Constitution, mentioned in that same paragraph, empowered the Government to impose reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech and expression in the interest, inter alia, of friendly relations with foreign States; it seemed to be one of only a very few such restrictive provisions in the Constitution.

25. Paragraphs 65 to 68 of the report illustrated the tremendous efforts being made by the Government to promote understanding and harmony among the various ethnic groups and foster unity in a heterogeneous society. The problem of untouchability could not be effectively solved by legislative or judicial measures alone, but required sweeping changes in attitude, which could be brought about only through education, public information activities and efforts to combat poverty and ignorance. The Indian Government should be commended for the efforts it was making to that end.

26. Mr. PARTSCH said that a general problem arising in connexion with the reports from all States with a federal structure was that a wealth of information was usually provided concerning the federal legal order, but there was very little information about the laws of the states comprising the federal union. In annex I to India's report, for example, it was stated that, under article 32A of the Constitution, the Supreme Court did not have jurisdiction to review the constitutionality of state laws, but no indication was given as to what court was competent to review such laws. Such information was essential if members were to have a clear picture of the situation with regard to the implementation of the Convention in India.

27. With regard to the general guarantee of the principle of equality before the

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(Mr. Partsch)

law in accordance with article 6 of the Convention, it was stated in the report (para. 12) that article 14 of the Constitution was a great protection against any form of unfair or unreasonable discrimination by any organ of the State. The report went on to state that apart from article 14 there were other provisions in the Constitution for the prevention of unfair discrimination, including article 15 (1), which prohibited discrimination on the ground of race. In his view, it was unfortunate that the ban on discrimination on the ground of race had been linked with the notion of unfairness; it would have been preferable to include an absolute ban on racial discrimination in the Constitution so as to avoid the need for any subjective judgement as to what constituted "fair" or "unfair" discrimination. Perhaps the problem was simply one of presentation in the report, and he requested further clarification on that question.

28. It was indicated in paragraph 16 that individual complaints could be brought before the High Courts, while elsewhere it was stated that other courts also had jurisdiction to review the constitutionality of laws and administrative measures. However, the relationship between the various jurisdictions was not explained, and he asked whether the decision of a court of appeals, for example, was definitive or whether it could be reviewed by a High Court.

29. He noted from paragraph 47 of the report that a number of seats in Parliament were reserved for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes but that, at the same time, members of those castes or tribes could secure seats in Parliament through the normal electoral process. Accordingly, he wished to know whether the reserved seats represented a minimum quota or whether they supplemented the seats won through elections. In other words, were the seats won in elections added to or deducted from the seats actually reserved for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes?

30. He welcomed the information on specific cases of discrimination brought before the courts. Such information contributed substantially to an interpretation of the Convention based on judicial experience rather than mere administrative opinion.

31. The report as a whole provided an extremely impressive picture of India's legal system and the tremendous problems which that country was facing with regard to discrimination.

32. Mr. BAHNEV endorsed the comments made by Mr. Partsch. Both the report and its annexes demonstrated clearly the tremendous range of problems which the Indian Government faced in implementing the Convention. The frankness of the report was also to be commended. For instance, in connexion with the reference to the twenty-fourth report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (para. 22) there was a frank admission that Parliament believed that the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, did not adequately penalize the practice of untouchability. The report also admitted that discrimination against untouchables was still far from being eradicated. It further provided valuable information on specific complaints submitted to the Commissioner and to the courts, and on decisions handed down by the courts, which helped to show how Indian law was being adapted to the provisions of the Convention.

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(Mr. Bahnev)

33. The report also indicated that Indian citizens enjoyed the right of individual redress and could take their complaints to the Supreme Court. In that connexion, he was interested to know what expenditures were incurred in such action and whether financial assistance was given to individuals who sought redress.

34. He had some difficulties with concepts reflected in the report which were obviously specific to India. For instance, the Minorities Commission established pursuant to article 30 of the Indian Constitution appeared to be concerned only with religious and linguistic minorities, and article 15 of the Constitution seemed to depart from the spirit of the Convention in that it did not mention the concept of discrimination based on national or ethnic origin. He would welcome an indication from the Indian representative as to how his Government defined a minority. For instance, was religion an indication of ethnic origin, or was the Minorities Commission concerned with ethnic as well as religious and linguistic minorities? He hoped that the sixth periodic report of India would report on the activities of the Minorities Commission, and also in greater detail on the work of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

35. He could not accept the procedure described in paragraph 40 with regard to the implementation of article 4 (b) of the Convention, and wished to know what special circumstances could be invoked to justify collective punishment of the practice of untouchability. With regard to article 7 of the Convention, it appeared that the subject of human rights was taught only in universities and he would welcome more information from the Indian Government as to how article 7 was in fact being implemented. With regard to article 2 (d) of the Convention, article 15 (2) of the Indian Constitution mentioned only some of the areas in which discrimination was possible. There were many other areas where discrimination could be practised by individuals. He also wished to know what the Indian Government was doing to prevent discrimination in employment.

36. Those comments notwithstanding, he wished to commend the Indian Government on its clear report on the current situation in India.

37. Mr. DECHEZELLES observed that the current philosophy and action of the Indian Government reflected its debt to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Respect for human dignity, and opposition to racial discrimination and practices such as untouchability, had acquired a universal dimension since Gandhi had first advocated them. More recently, Nehru had stated that democracy was not just a system of government but a way of life, and that it could not be achieved simply by adopting the external trappings of representative government if individuals did not cherish democracy in their own hearts. The report submitted by India sought to implement Gandhi's philosophy of human dignity and illustrated India's constant struggle to eliminate the inequalities with which Indian society was ridden.

38. To Western eyes, India, with its vast area and huge population, presented a very complex picture which was extremely difficult to piece together. As a Westerner, he was not in a position to criticize a country with which he was not overly familiar. Nevertheless, he did wish to seek clarification of certain points.

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(Mr. Dechezelles)

39. With regard to article 5 of the Convention, article 14 of the Indian Constitution enunciated the principle of equality. However, he would welcome an explanation from the representative of India as to what legal remedies were available to individuals to ensure that they effectively enjoyed equality of rights before the law. In addition, paragraph 15 of the report described measures taken to prevent discrimination in public employment, but the report made no reference to employment in the private sector.

40. With regard to paragraph 17 of the report, he agreed with earlier speakers that, to Western eyes at least, the idea that innocence must be proven was unacceptable. A practical illustration of how that concept was applied would be most welcome. The provision described in paragraph 18 might also be unacceptable to Westerners, for, in their eyes, public servants guilty of negligence in investigating an offence were not necessarily guilty of abetting that offence.

41. With regard to article 4 (a) of the Convention, he assumed that article 19 (2) of the Indian Constitution could be invoked when individuals or groups were guilty of incitement to racial discrimination. In the same connexion, he welcomed the information given in paragraph 31 of the report, which showed that article 4 (a) of the Convention was being effectively implemented.

42. He welcomed the frankness with which the Indian Government had dealt with the question of untouchability, and only wished that other Governments would adopt the same approach to similar problems in their own countries. He did not feel that he was in a position to judge whether the idea of collective punishment of the practice of untouchability was good or bad, for he was not sufficiently familiar with Indian life and customs. In any case, the question of collective punishment was not covered by the Convention.

43. He wondered to what extent equality for the scheduled castes and tribes was real or merely theoretical, for when the Government had established quotas for the scheduled castes and tribes in public service and other categories of employment, the Supreme Court had refused to implement some quotas on the ground that they constituted reverse discrimination. That situation simply confirmed that the struggle against untouchability would be long and arduous, and the Indian Government should be commended for its unfailing efforts to integrate untouchables into Indian society.

44. It was his understanding that the Indian Constitution was currently being revised to encompass the amendments made since its adoption. He wished to know to what extent that revision would affect the provisions of the Constitution relating to the Convention.

45. Those comments were not intended as criticism, but reflected an attempt to stand outside the values of his own society in evaluating India's situation and the difficulties confronting it. That was his way of practising Gandhi's teachings.

46. Mr. DEVETAK congratulated the Government of India on producing an excellent

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(Mr. Devetak)

report. That report reflected the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, whose advocacy of human dignity and equality had provided the inspiration for the Convention and for the efforts of the international community at large.

47. India's position on racial discrimination and apartheid had also inspired the international community, for it was India which had first raised the issue of racial discrimination in South Africa in the United Nations in 1946 and had spearheaded United Nations action in that area ever since.

48. India had also made a major contribution to the struggle of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to eradicate racism and racial discrimination with a view to promoting international peace, security and co-operation. That contribution was in keeping with article 3 of the Convention and with recent decisions and recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

49. He welcomed the detailed information on scheduled castes and scheduled tribes given on pages 12 to 18 of the report. The Committee had requested more information on that subject when it had considered India's fourth periodic report, so that it could see how a country the size of India dealt with a vast, multiracial population. The information now furnished was extremely impressive. He particularly commended the Government's efforts, as described in paragraph 54, to ensure that members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were well represented in public service posts. With regard to paragraph 44, he would be interested to know the precise composition of the Minorities Commission and whether it included representatives of the minorities concerned. With regard to paragraph 45, he wished to know what criteria had been used to identify the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

50. Mr. BRIN MARTINEZ commended the Indian Government on the detailed information provided concerning measures to comply with its obligations under the Convention. India's unique composition and its particular social, economic and political organization meant that the country could not be judged by yardsticks applicable to other countries. As an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement, India had consistently campaigned against racial discrimination in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

51. Paragraph 35 of the report referred to the punishment for preaching and practising untouchability prescribed by the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. Paragraph 38 indicated that punishment was also provided for in section 125 of the Representation of Peoples Act of 1951. He wished to know whether there was any possibility of conflict in the application of the two Acts.

52. Paragraph 56 stated that the scheduled tribes were simple communities which, before independence, had been, by and large, isolated from the mainstream of national life. India should give details of the development programmes for the tribal areas so that the Committee could determine exactly what were the opportunities for the more isolated tribes to be integrated into the mainstream of national life.

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(Mr. Brin Martinez)

53. Paragraph 58 stated that Tribes Advisory Councils had been set up in certain States to advise Governors on matters concerning the welfare of scheduled tribes and the development of scheduled areas. Information should be given on how the Councils functioned in advising the Governors and on the specific programmes designed to develop the areas. In conclusion, he inquired as to the status of aliens in India with specific reference to employment, social security and housing.

54. Mr. GOUNDIAM said that the Indian Government had adopted commendable measures to implement the provisions of the Convention, in particular articles 4 and 5. He could see the justification for some of the measures, which might at first appear unusual and surprising. India still had much to do in promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among racial and ethnic groups, pursuant to article 7 of the Convention. His Government was encouraging Senegalese students to study Dravidian languages, and Senegalese groups sometimes performed Indian folk dances and folk music in Senegal. He was interested to know what India was doing to foster interpenetration between Indian and other cultures, especially African cultures.

55. Paragraph 1 of the report stated that 15 languages were recognized in the Constitution. He inquired as to the criteria for such recognition and whether the dialects spoken in the country were also written. Paragraph 16 referred to the judicial review of legislation and executive action in respect of matters relating to fundamental rights. He requested details about the procedure whereby a legislative measure could be subjected to judicial review.

56. Paragraph 17 stated that the accused had to prove that he had not committed an offence against the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. The paragraph added that it was for the prosecution to prove that the accused was guilty. The two statements appeared contradictory. If the accused was presumed guilty, then there was no need to prove his guilt.

57. Article 335 of the Constitution, quoted at the end of annex I, stated that the claims of the members of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes would be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connexion with the affairs of the Union or of a State. The precise meaning of the word "consistently" should be explained.

58. Mr. GHONEIM said the report showed that the Indian Government had made an earnest effort to take into account all the Committee's questions and comments in connexion with the fourth periodic report. The large amount of information in the current report testified to the Government's sincere desire to comply with the provisions of the Convention, bearing in mind the enormous problems inherited from the colonial era and the demographic, ethnic and religious complexity of the subcontinent.

59. Paragraph 12 of the report stated that article 14 of the Indian Constitution was a great protection against any form of unfair or unreasonable discrimination

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(Mr. Ghoneim)

by any organ of the State. The question was, what was meant by "unfair or unreasonable discrimination" and whether the legislators had envisaged forms of fair and reasonable discrimination by organs of the State. The Convention permitted States to take certain measures to protect disadvantaged groups, but not to engage in discrimination.

60. Article 14 of the Constitution, quoted on page 1 of annex I of the report, read: "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India". The wording of the Convention was much more forceful and positive. Under article 5, States parties undertook to "guarantee" the right of everyone to equal treatment before the tribunals. He asked whether the role of the Indian State was limited to not denying to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws, or whether it actually guaranteed such equality and equal protection.

61. Paragraph 13 of the report stated that the law in India made no distinction as between different citizens on racial or other grounds in respect of certain rights. As to the right to marriage and choice of spouse, it was stated that individuals were governed by their own personal laws, which were generally the laws of the community to which they belonged. He wished to know whether a similar qualification or any other qualification applied to the right to inherit.

62. Mr. SHAHI said that he wished to make it clear that his comments were being made in a personal capacity and did not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Pakistan.

63. India had submitted a most impressive report setting forth the relevant provisions of its liberal and democratic Constitution. Those provisions were more comprehensive than the provisions of the Convention in their prohibition of discrimination on religious grounds. India had an outstanding record in the struggle against racial discrimination and apartheid and had been the first country to seek action at the international level to combat those scourges. It also had a creditable record in promoting the development of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. He was pleased to note that out of a total of 3,997 seats in State Assemblies, 822 were reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (para. 48) and that the representatives concerned were playing a leading role in India's political life. He welcomed the fact that the Constitution prohibited the State from discriminating against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them (CERD/C/20/Add.34, annex I, art. 15 (1)).

64. Article 26 of the Constitution accorded to every religious denomination the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes and to manage its own affairs in matters of religion. Article 30 (1) conferred on all minorities, whether based on religion or language, the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Those provisions passed every test in regard to legal standards and norms. It was important to bear in mind, however, the history of relationships among different communities in India and India's conscious effort to maintain its pluralistic character. The report

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(Mr. Shahi)

had to be considered in the light of the standards India had set for itself in seeking to preserve its rich diversity and the culture of the various communities. He would like to see more positive action for the preservation and autonomy of educational institutions established by religious groups, especially the Moslems. It was not enough to adopt provisions of a negative character such as article 29 (2), which read: "No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them." The preservation of the cultures of minorities called for more positive measures. If a community lacked the necessary resources and therefore received grants from the State, it was necessary to ensure that the community continued to manage the institution and preserve its orientation and philosophy. As was stated in paragraph 41 of the report, the State had a responsibility to take special measures in favour of those who, for historical and other reasons, were trailing behind and had been and still were suffering from various disabilities. The Minorities Commission was responsible for taking, when the circumstances so warranted, special and concrete measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups, pursuant to article 2, paragraph 2, of the Convention. The reference to "certain racial groups" was broad enough to cover religious minorities.

65. The Constitution guaranteed the right to employment by the State and equality of opportunity. Where communities were not at the same level of educational advancement, the principle of equality of opportunity would not by itself ensure adequate representation. Specific measures had already been taken to ensure adequate representation for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the public services. Similar protection could perhaps be extended to other minorities, in a conscious effort to bring their representation to a level commensurate with their numerical strength, build confidence among the groups concerned and help to guarantee enjoyment of rights and freedoms under the Constitution.

66. With respect to legislation prohibiting racial discrimination and incitement to hatred against minorities and other groups, the provisions of the Penal Code were sufficiently comprehensive. However, the enactment of legislation was only a first step. The more difficult problem was to enforce such legislation, particularly in a democratic federal State where State Governors were responsible for enforcement. A situation could arise in which parties committed to the concept of racial supremacy and domination could find themselves in power. The problem then would be how to go about enforcing the provisions in question against elements of the Government. The ultimate solution was the enlightenment of the people, and he was impressed to see that the Indian body politic had been resilient enough to generate forces to combat those favouring racial or religious domination. In all countries, including Pakistan, serious attention should be given to the complex matter of incitement to hatred.

67. Paragraph 44 of the report indicated that the Minorities Commission would make periodic reports at prescribed intervals to the Government. Information

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(Mr. Shahi)

on the Commission's findings to date should be given either by the representative of India at the current session or in the sixth periodic report.

68. The importance of the implementation of the provisions of the Convention in the interest of friendly relations, peace and stability could not be over-emphasized. Minorities often had affiliations with large segments of the population in other States, and tensions developing in one country could easily spill across national boundaries and put a strain on international relations. Ultimately the benefits derived from ensuring the well-being of minorities were not confined within national boundaries.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

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