



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 61st MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. SHALANI (Philippines)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 89: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 90: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be incorporated in a copy of the record and should be sent *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550.

Corrections will be issued shortly after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/33/SR.61
7 December 1978
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE (continued)
(A/33/160; A/C.3/33/L.54)

AGENDA ITEM 90: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS
(A/33/151, A/33/183)

1. Mr. HEINEMANN (Netherlands) welcomed the fact that the Committee was discussing item 89, especially as four years had elapsed since it had considered it more than in passing. He hoped that the discussion would give a stimulus to the Commission on Human Rights, in terms of suggestions and ideas.
2. As far back as 1946, the General Assembly had declared that in the interests of humanity an immediate end should be put to two kinds of discrimination - religious and racial - and had called for prompt and energetic steps towards that objective. As for racial discrimination, the steps taken by the United Nations had been energetic, if not perhaps prompt. For instance, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination adopted in 1963 had been followed in 1965 by a Convention on the same subject. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had evolved into perhaps the most effective human rights organ. The Assembly had adopted numerous resolutions on racial discrimination, which had also been the subject of ILO and UNESCO conventions.
3. By contrast, action by the United Nations concerning discrimination based on religion had been neither prompt nor energetic. It was not until 1962 that the drafting of a pertinent international instrument had started and now, 16 years later, there was nothing more than the beginning of a draft declaration. Consequently, what the Committee was discussing was "neglected discrimination". His delegation was, of course, aware of the comprehensive nature of the subject and of the fact that freedom of religion presupposed respect for many other rights. It was also aware that the complexity of the issues had a direct bearing on the amount of time involved in drafting an appropriate legal instrument. All the same, the Commission on Human Rights had very little to show in the way of results after dealing with the subject for so many years, as could be seen from the Commission's report on its thirty-fourth session (E/CN.4/1292). His delegation found it alarming that it had been impossible for the working group set up by the Commission for the purpose of drafting a declaration to agree on the wording of article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as a basis for article 1 of the declaration, particularly as a more restrictive wording had been proposed by representatives of States that had ratified the Covenant. His delegation trusted that the Commission had not set out on a course that might detract from rather than add to what had already been accepted as international standards.
4. Under the circumstances, instead of the wording proposed by his Government and the Government of Sweden for article 1, he would rather see a text which followed that of the first three paragraphs of article 18 of the Covenant. It

/...

(Mr. Heinemann, Netherlands)

could be and had been argued that that did not represent a step forward and amounted only to the reaffirmation of a rule of international law. However, it could be considered positive, because it might give the Commission the momentum to arrive at an early completion of its task, and because that rule could be further developed in the remaining articles of the draft declaration. His delegation believed that the 1974 draft could still serve as a basis for the Commission's further actions.

5. A second way to expedite the drafting would be for the working group to set a time-table for consideration of the remaining articles of the draft declaration and to attempt to arrive at an inventory of major obstacles to a consensus.

6. His Government's approach was based on the premise that the fundamental rights and freedoms enunciated in article 18 of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights should be elaborated. However, international rules did not in themselves suffice; it was only if public interest was aroused and action by Governments was encouraged that a shift in attitudes could be achieved.

7. Miss KAGONDU (Kenya), referring to item 89, said that history was strewn with episodes of religious intolerance. In recent times, colonialism had been justified under the pretext of a civilizing mission, which had essentially meant the spread of one religion or another. The fact that the imposition of a religion had been only a minor element of colonialism did not mean that it had been unimportant, because it had far-reaching consequences in a society.

8. In many parts of Africa, for example, much of the cultural heritage had been suppressed as uncivilized or sinful. That was a manifestation of the condemned practice of spreading the ideology of cultural superiority, which was a brain-child of the ideology of racial superiority. The divisive tendencies, not only between nations but also within one society, resulting from religious intolerance were also alarming.

9. It was therefore gratifying for her delegation to note that the United Nations had concerned itself with that idea from its inception. In the Charter, the world community pledged itself to practise tolerance. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contained many references to tolerance and freedom of religion. Kenya fully guaranteed religious freedom to all its people, and it was so stated in article 78 of its Constitution. Mzee Jomo Kenyatta had encouraged the participation of all religious groups in national events. Kenya was convinced that religious intolerance was an obstacle to friendly relations between peoples. It therefore supported the decision to elaborate first a declaration and then a convention on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance, and urged the Commission on Human Rights to conclude its work as soon as possible.

10. With regard to item 90, she firmly supported the efforts of the United Nations and its agencies to ensure that recent scientific and technological discoveries were used for social, cultural and economic progress. She also

/...

(Miss Kagundu, Kenya)

supported action to solve the problems affecting human rights which arose from scientific and technological development. Kenya had established a national Science and Technology Council through which it hoped to benefit from scientific and technological developments.

11. Mr. MEZVINSKY (United States of America) said that, for the United States, freedom of religion and the struggle against discrimination and intolerance based on religion were an essential ingredient of its national identity. Today, one of the great sources of concern for human rights, individual dignity and fundamental freedoms was the religious community. The United States longed for the day when the draft declaration would be complete and be part of the common heritage of all nations. However, it did not believe that the declaration would assume its final form until more nations took an interest in it, and he hoped that draft resolution A/C.3/33/L.54, of which his delegation was a sponsor, would be adopted by consensus, thus demonstrating everyone's interest in continuing the process begun in the Charter of elaborating the standards and aspirations of all peoples.

12. He urged the Commission on Human Rights, in which the United States took a great interest, to try to complete its work on the item at its next session in February 1979. He hoped that all nations, irrespective of their ideology or background, would demonstrate their will to eliminate the scourge of religious intolerance.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/33/3 and Add.1 (Parts I and II), 163 and Corr.1, 219, 281, 293, 331; E/CN.4/Sub.2/412 (vols. I to IV); E/CN.4/Sub.2/SR.816-818; A/C.3/33/7, A/C.3/33/26; A/C.3/33/L.4, L.20, L.26, L.30, L.40, L.42, L.44, L.49, L.51)

13. Mr. KOKILANON (Thailand) said that his Government, being aware of the gravity of the drug problem as a public health and social problem, had launched a co-ordinated programme of action with the objective of progressively eliminating poppy cultivation and illicit trafficking. Special attention was being given to a rehabilitation programme, and there were increasing numbers of treatment centres throughout the country. Law enforcement officers were vigorously pursuing their efforts to detect and arrest drug traffickers, who were subsequently severely punished. However, in order for the implementation of control and preventive measures to be effective, technical and financial assistance would be required from the international community.

14. In that connexion, his delegation considered that the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control should be given the necessary financial support to enable it to continue providing technical and financial assistance to various projects, in particular the ongoing crop replacement and integrated community development projects within the so-called "Golden Triangle". For its part, the Thai Government had prepared a proposal concerning production, credit and marketing services for highland agriculture for the consideration of United Nations officials who were expected in Bangkok shortly, and it hoped that the project could be launched in March 1979 with adequate technical and financial resources.

/...

(Mr. Kokilanon, Thailand)

15. Reduction of the illicit demand for drugs should be carried out by means of educational programmes, and the United Nations could provide a great deal of assistance. The regional commissions and intergovernmental organizations should be encouraged to co-operate with the United Nations in devising new programmes of action against drug abuse. Financial assistance should also be given to research projects under United Nations auspices, particularly on drug addiction among the hill tribes in the Golden Triangle area.

16. His Government would continue to co-operate with the United Nations and other international agencies, and with interested Governments, in the effort to eradicate that serious problem. He took the opportunity to thank the Federal Republic of Germany for introducing draft resolution A/C.3/33/L.42, of which his delegation was a sponsor, and hoped that it would be unanimously adopted.

17. Miss VAN DEN ASSUM (Netherlands), referring to the part of the report of the Economic and Social Council dealing with the reinforcement of the social development sector within the United Nations, said it was the position of the Netherlands Government that economic progress and social progress were not merely related issues, but were in fact fully interdependent and complementary. Social development was dependent on a minimum level of economic conditions which permitted an adequate standard of living, and economic progress did not fulfil its purpose if it did not seek to eradicate poverty and encourage the free development of the human personality.

18. Although the interrelationship between social development and economic development was recognized, their definitions were still liable to constant change, and her delegation was convinced of the need to clarify the concept of social development. Consequently, it supported the establishment of the ad hoc working group envisaged in Economic and Social Council resolution 2079 (LXII), with the twofold task of contributing to the clarification of the concept of social development and advising on the possibilities and ways and means of strengthening the social component in the development process. The working group could provide a very important contribution to the discussion on the strengthening of the social development input in the preparation of a new development strategy and on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system.

19. International economic relations should be directed towards the achievement of the objectives of the new international economic order and the realization of a more equitable international distribution of available resources. However, that principle of equity should also be applied at the national level, with the aim of achieving a more equitable distribution of work and income and improvement of the living conditions of the great mass of the population. It should be recognized that the objective of development was the well-being of all people, and the social aspects of development should be given due consideration in the elaboration of the new development strategy.

20. She urged the Economic and Social Council, at its organizational session for 1979, to review the working group's terms of reference as decided in Council resolution 1978/35 with a view to implementing its resolution 2079 (LXII).

/...

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

21. Mrs. TAKAHASHI (Japan) said that, having examined with care the draft resolutions pertaining to agenda item 88 (United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace), her delegation had found that none of them made reference to the extremely important report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women (A/33/339). Her delegation had therefore entered into consultations with other members of the Committee and, as a result, was of the view that the Committee should adopt a resolution on that report of the Secretary-General. However, the deadline for submitting draft resolutions concerning item 88, except for those relating to the venue of the Conference had already been passed. In view of the importance of the matter to the success of the Conference, and in view of the fact that consultations were still under way, she requested that the earlier decision on the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions should be reversed and the deadline extended to Friday, 1 December.

22. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the delegation of Japan had previously reserved the right to revert to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. In view of the request which had been made, she would take it, if there was no objection, that the Committee agreed to reverse its earlier decision on the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions concerning agenda item 88.

23. It was so decided.

24. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in that case, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions concerning item 88, except for those relating to the venue of the Conference, should be 6 p.m. on Thursday, 30 November.

25. It was so decided.

26. The CHAIRMAN further suggested that the deadline for the submission of all draft resolutions concerning items on which the general debate had been concluded, namely, items 73, 74, 78, 80, 86, 88 and 127, and items now being considered by the Committee, namely, items 89 and 90, should be 6 p.m. on Thursday, 30 November.

27. Mrs. CHATER (Tunisia) said she did not think that the members of the Group of 77 would be able to submit their draft resolutions on items 78 and 80 by that deadline, and requested that it should be extended.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the statement of the representative of Tunisia, those items would be excluded from the list.

29. She suggested that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/33/L.51, concerning the International Year for Disabled Persons, and draft resolution A/C.3/33/L.44, concerning protection of the human rights of arrested or detained trade union activists (agenda item 12), should introduce them at the following day's meeting,

/...

and that all delegations wishing to introduce draft resolutions on items now under consideration should do so at the morning meeting on the following day.

30. She announced that Viet Nam had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/33/L.46 under item 86 and of draft resolution A/C.3/33/L.49 under item 12. Ethiopia had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/33/L.29 under item 88.

31. If there was no objection, she would take it that the Committee agreed that the list of speakers on items 12, 89 and 90 should be closed at the end of the current meeting.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.