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THIRD COMMITTEE
6th meeting
held on
Monday, 4 October 1976
at 11 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ALFONSO (Cuba)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, since consultations were still proceeding, consideration of the item should be postponed until a later meeting.
2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 69: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (A/31/97, 151, 168, 170, 178 and 206) (continued)

- (a) DECADE FOR ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (A/31/3) (chap. III, sect. F), A/31/148 and 223; E/5759 and Add.1, E/5760 and Add.1, E/5673) (continued)

3. Mr. SOBHY (Egypt) said that as a result of the struggle against racism, racial discrimination and apartheid in Africa, the racist régimes in Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and Namibia were being driven to despair and the determination of the African Governments to root out racism had been strengthened. However, there must be no slackening of effort; continued pressure must be brought to bear on all the racist Governments until all forms of racism and racial discrimination had been totally eliminated.

4. The documents before the Committee showed that positive action against racism was being taken on many fronts. Thanks were due to the Government of Ghana for the preparations it was making to hold the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. Egypt would do everything in its power to make the Conference a success, and was willing, in particular, to make a contribution to its costs. The Conference would undoubtedly strengthen the determination of mankind to struggle against racism, but if it was to succeed fully, steps must be taken immediately to prepare programmes and projects for the period after the Conference. A time-table of possible future activities should be drawn up. It would be helpful if the Secretary-General would prepare a list of the future events and activities that were already planned at the national and international levels for submission to the Conference. He agreed with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that such activities should not be left to individual initiatives and he welcomed the decision taken by the Committee at its eleventh session to take part in the preparation for the World Conference.

5. Although many of the resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies, particularly those adopted at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, had struck fear to the hearts of the racist régimes in southern Africa, Israel was reaffirming its links with those racist systems, meeting their leaders, strengthening its trade and increasing its deliveries of weapons to them. Such collaboration was particularly strong in the monetary field, as was clear from the report of the Special Committee against Apartheid (A/31/22/Add.2). It was not surprising, therefore, that in the eyes of the Arab peoples the policies of the racist régimes of southern Africa and those of Israel were indistinguishable.

(Mr. Sobhy, Egypt)

6. He would not enumerate the many activities which Egypt was undertaking to combat racism or underline its unwavering determination to implement the United Nations decisions and resolutions combating racism. He would like to say, however, that Egypt had no diplomatic, trade, cultural or other relations with any of the régimes practising racism and it was participating in all regional activities aimed at the elimination of racial discrimination, whether organized within the League of Arab States or by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) or the non-aligned countries. It supported all the programmes in that field formulated by United Nations specialized agencies. Egypt had been one of the first countries to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and it was using all information media and educational programmes to inform the young about the abhorrent practice of apartheid and other forms of discrimination. In conclusion, he urged all countries to support the struggle against racism and isolate the racist régimes.

7. Mr. PALACIO (Mexico) welcomed the fact that the present item had been given the priority it deserved in view of the racial oppression prevailing in southern Africa, which was a threat to world peace and security. His country was an enemy of racial discrimination in all its forms; in its view, the international community must increase its efforts to eliminate such discrimination, which had been stigmatized as a crime against humanity in many United Nations resolutions. The recent events at Soweto had shed a glaring light on the Government of South Africa's repressive methods.

8. In resolution 3057 (XXVIII) the General Assembly had adopted the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and had invited Governments to intensify and expand their efforts towards ensuring the rapid eradication of racism and racial discrimination. The Mexican Government, supported by its people, had done everything possible to give effect to that resolution. It had refused to allow South Africa to participate in sporting, scientific or cultural activities in Mexico and it had also forbidden Mexican teams to participate in events outside Mexico at which South Africa was represented. For instance, Mexican players had twice refused to play against South Africans in the Davis Cup tennis tournament, which had led the organizing committee of the tournament to recommend the suspension and expulsion of the Mexican team from the tournament, held in London in July 1976; but the recommendation had been rejected. The Mexican team had not played in the international soft-ball championship because South Africa had been a competitor.

9. In the scientific field, Mexico had refused visas to the South African representatives who had been going to participate in a symposium on uranium deposits organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Mexico, with the result that the venue of the meeting had been changed. The Mexican Government had also refused visas to the South African representatives who wished to participate in the twelfth International Congress on Large Dams and in a meeting of the Governors of the Inter-American Development Bank.

(Mr. Palacio, Mexico)

10. A delegation of the African National Council (Zimbabwe) had visited Mexico in the course of 1976. It had been well received by the Mexican Government, which had reaffirmed its support of Zimbabwe's struggle for liberation.

11. Mexico was a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and had submitted its first report under article 9 thereof, which had been considered by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in August 1976. It wished to congratulate Ghana on the efforts it was making to prepare the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. Lastly, he appealed to all countries to comply with the United Nations resolutions against racial discrimination.

12. Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland) said that the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination was an important step forward in the struggle against racial discrimination and a logical follow-up to the adoption of the International Convention on the same subject. His country had been quick to ratify the Convention, which was fully implemented in Finland. It was encouraging that a steadily increasing number of countries were following suit.

13. The Finnish Government and people firmly rejected all forms of racial discrimination, as had been made clear in many different international forums. His Government had not only spoken out against racism and discrimination, but had taken practical steps to assist in the struggle against it, such as contributing to the United Nations funds for southern Africa and supporting national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity. It firmly rejected the policy of apartheid, the elimination of which should be one of the main goals of the Decade. In his statement in the general debate in the General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland had expressed abhorrence of the violence and brutality shown by the South African authorities and had stressed the need for strengthening United Nations action against South Africa.

14. It was natural that the debate in the Third Committee should bring out the same points and that the conference to be held in connexion with the Decade should be held in Africa. He therefore welcomed the invitation extended by the Government of Ghana and he expressed the hope that the same consensus which had prevailed in the General Assembly when resolution 3057 (XXVIII) embodying the Programme for the Decade had been adopted would prevail at the Conference and ensure its success. It should be borne in mind, however, that adequate funds, both for the preparatory work and for the Conference itself, were equally essential to its success.

15. The efforts to implement the Programme for the Decade in Finland had been concentrated on creating a greater awareness of the absolute inacceptability of racial discrimination, as proclaimed in articles 1 and 2 of the International Convention. The educational measures and mass communication programmes adopted in Finland had resulted in an intensification of the activities of non-governmental organizations concerned to promote the goals of the Programme for the Decade. He was convinced that, thanks to the common efforts being undertaken against apartheid, a great step forward would be made in the struggle against racial discrimination during the Decade.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.