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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. von KYAW (Federal Republic of Germany)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 83: PRESERVATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF
CULTURAL VALUES (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 76: IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO
SELF-DETERMINATION AND OF THE SPEEDY GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES
AND PEOPLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE AND OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: REPORT OF
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 70: ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL,
MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO COLONIAL AND RACIST REGIMES
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: PRESERVATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL VALUES (A/31/111; A/C.3/31/L.8 and Rev.1) (continued)

1. Mr. HACHEME (Benin) said that cultural values were both the reflection of civilization and the means of transmitting it. To those peoples who, like the Africans, had an oral tradition, cultural values were the most intact, most complete and most objective expression of daily life. Therefore, cultural values must be protected and preserved, and that was a vast and costly undertaking. Consequently, his delegation was gratified that UNESCO had taken up the matter and had been able to save priceless cultural monuments from destruction. Those efforts deserved the support of the international community.
2. As against that, certain colonial Powers, under the pretext of preserving cultural values from destruction or loss, had organized the systematic and large-scale plundering of the territories which they had conquered. The seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the first quarter of the twentieth century had seen the organized theft of the cultural heritage of the colonial peoples. It was sufficient to visit the British Museum in London, the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, the Prado Museum in Madrid or the Museum in Lisbon to realize the unpleasant truth that they had more than 80 per cent of the originals of the African works of art produced in their former colonies. Despite numerous resolutions of UNESCO and OAU, among others, the former colonial Powers persisted in their refusal to hand back those original works of art.
3. Cultural values could only develop to the extent that those works were restored to their rightful owners, which were the Governments of the independent nations of the third world. For that reason, his delegation took the opportunity to make an official request that the United Nations should take appropriate measures to ensure the restitution of those cultural objects which had been unjustly seized, and was ready to consult with the former colonial Power concerned regarding the conditions for their transfer.
4. Mr. DABO (Guinea) said that for the African peoples, the first cultural act was liberation. That could be achieved by political means, or by armed struggle if peaceful means failed. Guinea well understood the necessity to develop science and technology, since Africa had fallen under alien domination because of the technological superiority of the colonial Powers.
5. The Republic of Guinea was aware that culture always had a social origin and a social dimension and that under certain régimes culture was monopolized by a minority which used it to mystify, dominate and exploit the majority of the population. There was no such thing as a black culture and a white culture, only peoples of different colours, with different religions and different nationalities, organized under different social systems, who expressed their thoughts and desires in different ways using various methods of expression according to their level of intellectual, technical and moral development. That led him to assert that there was no such thing as a people without culture.

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(Mr. Dabo, Guinea)

6. The African peoples must preserve their personality and affirm the values of their civilization with no feelings of inferiority to other social or cultural entities. Africa refused to accept the role of a beggar at the gate of foreign cultures. The approval by OAU of the Cultural Charter bore witness to the will of the African continent to rehabilitate itself in the cultural sphere as in any other.

7. Culture sprang from life, from movement. Therefore, life was the first condition of culture in the sense that in order to preserve culture man must establish relations with nature and with other human beings. Culture was therefore a collective act directed towards a collective end. In order to give expression to that principle, which required that culture should be an act of the people, Guinea had, during the period after its liberation, set up in every village and urban district a theatre group, traditional and modern music groups and a sports association. Those groups formed part of larger units organized in wider administrative districts and took part in competitions terminating in the national artistic and cultural fortnights, ten of which had been organized to date. The cultural and artistic life of his country thus became the concern of the whole people, since the members of the juries which awarded the prizes were drawn from every social level.

8. Mrs. KALLIGAS (Greece) said that as noted in the report by the Director-General of UNESCO on the preservation and further development of cultural values (A/31/111) the decline in the importance attached to the spiritual aspects of life in societies where development models predominated, and in which excessive priority was attached to economic components such as growth, production and consumption, nearly always worked to the detriment of man's deepest aspirations. Such development models had invaded the international scene and were widely used by developed as well as developing countries with the same unsatisfactory over-all effect. Greece, until very recently, had been no exception to the rule. However, as a direct result of that unsatisfactory experience, the world community, as the report stated, had come to view development as a multidimensional process in which economic, political, social and cultural factors were taken into account and in which societies were not seen in isolation but were regarded as elements of a complex network of relationships and forces. That global view of development was of concern to all societies, the most advanced as well as the most economically disadvantaged.

9. Her delegation also fully agreed with the statement in the report that cultural leaders were becoming increasingly aware of the need to promote, through education and information, an awareness among the population of its responsibility for its cultural heritage as well as the social and aesthetic significance of the natural environment. Another issue to which her delegation attached great importance was the preservation of the diversity of cultural expression or, put in another way, the survival and further development of the specific within the global. She recalled in that respect that one of the main aesthetic values attributed to ancient Greek art, and especially architecture, was that of "unity within variety".

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(Mrs. Kalligas, Greece)

10. The position of her delegation on the question under consideration was not merely of a theoretical nature but was fully consistent with Government policy. In the new Constitution of 1975 special provisions had been included allowing for more effective Government intervention for the protection of the natural and cultural environment as well as monuments and historic sites and all objects of artistic value. Freedom of speech and artistic expression were guaranteed, as was the use of mass communication media for an objective and equitable transmission of information, news, ideas and the products of literature and art of a quality consonant with the highest cultural traditions of the country. Moreover, in the preparation of the five-year development plan at the beginning of the current year, cultural aspects of development had been carefully analysed and cultural goals had been granted equal consideration with and often priority over economic and social goals.

11. She trusted that draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.8/Rev.1, of which Greece was a sponsor, would be adopted unanimously.

12. Mr. DIOM (Senegal) said that the item under consideration had particular interest for Senegal whose President, Leopold Sedar Senghor, had reacted as far back as the 1930s to the allegations of certain European intellectual circles which, on the basis of the tabula rasa principle, had denied the existence of any black civilization and therefore of any black culture. That reaction had been the start, in the very heart of western culture, of a movement of black intellectuals whose essential object was the defence and illustration of the cultural values of the black world. In spite of that, and even though the existence of various types of culture was acknowledged, there were still circles which, for social and economic reasons, continued to defend the thesis of the superiority of certain cultures to others. Senegal could not conceive of such an argument and firmly refuted it.

13. History and geography made Senegal an international crossroads and a historical meeting place of Negro-African, Arab-Berber and Indo-European cultures, and those factors had obviously influenced Senegal's choice of cultural policy. The standards adopted by Senegal in that sphere were based on such fundamental principles as establishing national cultural values and opening the doors to cross-fertilization from other cultures. Senegal devoted about 33 per cent of its annual budget to cultural activities and every year there were more seminars, discussion groups, symposia and other cultural gatherings. While cultivating and protecting its own cultural heritage, Senegal was open to contributions from other cultures. Thus, some time before independence, the present Head of State had introduced in the secondary schools of the Territory the study of the Arabic language and civilization. Since that time the Arabic curriculum, which currently went up to university level, had steadily progressed. The same was true of other foreign languages such as English, Spanish, German, Russian and Portuguese, which were studied together with the cultures of which they were the means of expression. To that should be added the large number of multilateral and bilateral diplomatic instruments linking Senegal with international cultural organizations and other sovereign States.

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(Mr. Diom, Senegal)

14. Senegal was convinced that a harmonious fusion of different cultures would give birth to a universal civilization and a pan-human culture marked by the communion of all human beings and the reconciliation of man with nature, above all, with his own self.

15. Mr. SOBHY (Egypt) informed the Committee that his delegation intended to submit a new draft resolution on the item under consideration.

16. Mr. DOBROSIELSKI (Poland) proposed that, in the second preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.8/Rev.1, the words "the only basis" should be replaced by the words "one of the bases". He urged that a decision should be taken on the draft as soon as possible.

17. The CHAIRMAN, replying to a point raised by Ms. MATTESON (United States of America), confirmed that the 24-hour rule applied to all texts submitted on the item under consideration. He then announced that the Gambia, Guyana and Swaziland had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.8/Rev.1. Finally, he suggested that the time-limit for submission of draft resolutions on item 83 should be set at 6 p.m. that same day.

18. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 76: IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND OF THE SPEEDY GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE AND OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/31/152/Add.1-3, A/31/206, A/31/237; A/C.3/31/L.7 and L.10) (continued)

19. Mr. PARISIS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of his own delegation and those of Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, introduced the amendment to draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.7 contained in document A/C.3/31/L.10. The purpose of that amendment was to delete from paragraph 5 of the draft resolution the direct reference to NATO, an organization of which the sponsors of the amendment were members. In taking such an initiative, the sponsors had wished above all to raise a question of principle. They felt that there was no reason for that paragraph to include a reference to NATO, which was a defence organization whose activities were limited to the North Atlantic area. It should also be noted that, since its establishment in 1949, that organization had played a fundamental role in the maintenance of peace in the area, thereby contributing to world peace in general.

20. NATO did not interfere in any way with the bilateral or, as in some cases, community relations which its members maintained with States outside the North Atlantic area and, in particular, with the countries of Africa. As far as the policy of NATO members towards southern Africa was concerned, not one of them had recognized the pseudo-independence of Rhodesia. All were in favour of speedy and genuine independence for Namibia, and condemned unequivocally the unjust system of apartheid.

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(Mr. Parisis, Belgium)

21. Although most members of NATO maintained diplomatic relations with South Africa, it should be noted that, according to Western tradition, the establishment of diplomatic relations with a country did not imply automatic approval of its Government's policy. Furthermore, the NATO countries did not consider their relations with South Africa as encouraging the Pretoria Government to continue to repress the aspirations of the peoples of southern Africa to independence, self-determination and dignity. On the contrary, they felt that those relations facilitated dialogue and made it possible to influence South African policy in favour of a peaceful solution to the problems of southern Africa.

22. It should be remembered that, at the latest session of the Committee on Decolonization, no reference had been made to NATO in the texts similar to that which the Committee currently had before it. Furthermore, in February 1975, a mission of the Committee against Apartheid had met in Brussels with the highest authorities of NATO and the Chairman of the Committee had stated that he had obtained from official sources information and explanations which enabled the Committee to avoid misunderstandings.

23. The sponsors of the amendment contained in document A/C.3/31/L.10 strongly deplored the reference to NATO contained in draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.7, since they considered it a hindrance to the generally excellent bilateral or multilateral relations between the non-aligned countries of Africa and the members of NATO, relations which were based on mutual and absolute respect for the sovereignty of each country. Finally, he requested a roll-call vote on the amendment which he had introduced.

24. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) recalled that the item under consideration had been included for the first time in the agenda of the Third Committee in accordance with a draft resolution submitted by Pakistan at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly asking that consideration should be given to the question of self-determination as a basic human right. In general, his delegation considered the proposals in document A/C.3/31/L.7 to be in keeping with the previously agreed principles contained in the various texts on the question recommended by the Third Committee to the General Assembly, although it should be emphasized that the right to self-determination, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, had always been considered a basic human right of all peoples.

25. However, his delegation wished to propose to the sponsors of the draft resolution a number of amendments which he hoped would be favourably received since, in his view, they would strengthen the right to self-determination of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Firstly, he proposed that the first preambular paragraph should contain a reference to General Assembly resolution 2649 (XXV), which set forth the broad principles of the right to self-determination and recognized, in particular, the right to self-determination of the peoples of southern Africa and Palestine. Secondly, he proposed that the following new paragraph should be inserted after the fourth preambular paragraph: "Reiterating the obligation of all Member States to comply with the principles of the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations, regarding the exercise of the right of self-determination, by peoples under colonial and alien rule, recognized as

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(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

being entitled to this right." Finally, he proposed that the following reaffirmation, similar to the appeal made in the past by the General Assembly should be inserted after paragraph 1: "Calls upon all States to fully and faithfully implement the resolutions of the United Nations regarding the exercise of the right of self-determination by peoples under colonial and alien rule recognized as being entitled to this right."

26. The wording that he had proposed appeared in a number of United Nations resolutions and, specifically, in the first resolution adopted by the Third Committee when it had first taken up the item.

27. Mr. VOICU (Romania) noted that the African Group had included the substantive parts of General Assembly resolution 3382 (XXX) in draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.7. There was, however, an omission, since no reference was made to the studies by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities mentioned in that resolution. His delegation therefore proposed that after the present operative paragraph 9, a new passage should be inserted reproducing the wording of paragraph 7 of resolution 3382 (XXX), including subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c). The inclusion of that paragraph, which referred directly to the item under discussion, would serve as a stimulus to the Secretariat. Furthermore, repeated reference had been made, during the debate to the studies of the Sub-Commission, which would provide food for thought and a subject for discussion at future meetings of the Committee.

28. Mrs. MARICO (Mali) said that all the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.7 agreed that they could not accept the amendment in document A/C.3/31/L.10, which would therefore have to be put to the vote separately.

29. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Iraq and Yemen had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.7, and he requested that all amendments to that text should be submitted to the sponsors in writing. He also suggested that the time-limit for the submission of amendments to that draft resolution should be 1 p.m. that day.

30. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 70: ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO COLONIAL AND RACIST REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (A/31/221) (continued)

31. Mrs. AMONOO-NEIZER (Ghana) said that Africa provided a most striking illustration of the changes that had taken place in the political complexion of the world. The question which should now be considered was not whether the colonial and racist States in southern Africa had the ability to shape their destinies if they were given their freedom, but how far they could do so satisfactorily in the face of the activities of the foreign economic interests involved in those States. That was a question of immense importance to her delegation because it involved fundamental issues of a political and humanitarian character.

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(Mrs. Amonoo-Neizer, Ghana)

32. In a previous statement to the Committee, she had noted that the situation in South Africa had not really changed with regard to the repression directed by the racist régime against any flicker of dissent and Mr. Vorster's persistent refusal to grant the black population political rights which would enable it to participate in the government of South Africa. She drew attention to the fact that the forcible removal of large groups of Africans from one region to another was continuing and of course it was impossible to forget the massacre at Soweto and other places in which thousands of defenceless men, women and children had been massacred by the guns of the South African police.

33. The actions of Mr. Vorster's minority Government indicated that, contrary to what some Western countries claimed, the political, economic, military and sporting links which those countries were maintaining with South Africa had not had the effect of bringing about the changes in the situation in South Africa that were imperative. As Mr. Khalifa stated in paragraph 66 of his report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/371), far from exerting leverage for changed policies, foreign investments in the South African economy were strengthening the position of the régime by linking it to the interests of the western countries that were the sources of that capital. Furthermore, a recent article in the New York Times gave figures and data which showed the profound inequalities and injustices in the apartheid system with regard to the distribution of income and jobs between the black majority and the white minority. Another disgraceful aspect of the apartheid régime was its desperate efforts to attract white workers from western Europe to South Africa. Apart from depriving African or non-white workers of the opportunity to fill skilled jobs, the racist Government was spending a great deal of money on campaigns to attract white immigrants to South Africa which could be spent on training Africans for the same jobs, as studies carried out by ILO had shown.

34. The militarization of South Africa could be intended to blackmail independent African States. The attempts of the Western countries to involve Africa in their cold war politics forced the African countries to divert their attention from the more important task of repairing the damage done by colonialism. Furthermore, there could be no doubt that the guns used by South Africa to attack neighbouring countries, and particularly to slaughter African children, were the very guns supplied by the European Powers. The continued sale of arms to South Africa rendered the situation in that country a real threat to international peace and security.

35. The evidence presented in the Khalifa report on the situation in Southern Rhodesia and Namibia should strengthen the resolve of the international community to adopt more effective measures to bring about a quick transfer of power from the minority and racist régimes to the authentic representatives of the majority population. Foreign economic interests in Southern Rhodesia which operated under regulations discriminating against non-whites were also responsible for the exploitation, poverty and ignorance of the Africans.

36. The Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and other General Assembly resolutions had placed a responsibility on the Administering Powers of dependent

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(Mrs. Amonoo-Neizer, Ghana)

Territories to promote the political, economic and social advancement of the inhabitants and protect them from exploitation and abuse. Consequently the political, economic, military and social contacts which some Member States of the United Nations were maintaining with the racist régimes in southern Africa were a violation of the United Nations instruments she had mentioned. The delegation of Ghana condemned those activities and accused the countries maintaining those links of being accomplices in the crimes perpetrated by the racist and minority régimes in southern Africa. Her delegation was convinced that it would serve the cause of justice and promote the process of change if those links were severed. In urging such a course, the delegation of Ghana was not proposing anything different from the conclusions reached by various respected international bodies, including ILO, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the World Council of Churches and many others. The argument that the third world countries had advanced for many years, which was the same as that put forward by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in a pamphlet entitled "South Africa, the Escalation of a Conflict", was that the political dimension of foreign economic interests in southern Africa took the form of anti-communism in theory and support for actual co-operation with the white régimes in practice.

37. Changes must and would come about in southern Africa with regard to human rights and human dignity, and would certainly involve great sacrifices by all countries. The world had shown that it was capable of such sacrifices when it had fought to rid Europe of the scourge of Hitlerism. Apartheid was not very different from nazism, and the Western world should not hesitate to exercise a positive influence on South Africa.

38. Mr. AL-HUSSAMY (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed deep regret over what had happened in the Security Council the day before, when three Western States had vetoed a draft resolution submitted by the non-aligned countries calling for the discontinuance of all co-operation with South Africa. Those States bore a grave responsibility for the preservation of world peace and it was not the first time that they had prevented the adoption of measures of that kind. The Syrian delegation had on previous occasions condemned the assistance the Western Powers were giving to the régimes in southern Africa and occupied Palestine, and it wished to draw attention once again to the strong ties of solidarity that existed between the racist régimes of Pretoria and Tel Aviv. He thanked Mr. Khalifa for his report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/371) and supported the decision taken by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in that regard. He particularly called attention to paragraphs 24, 25 and 127 of the report, dealing with Vorster's visit to Israel and scientific and technological co-operation between Pretoria and Tel Aviv, and to paragraphs 62, 63 and 64, which dealt with relations in the field of manufacturing and the exchange of capital between the two régimes.

39. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the list of speakers on agenda item 70 should be closed at 1 p.m. on Thursday, 21 October.

40. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.