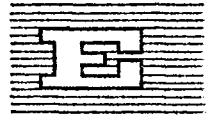


UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL  
E/CN.4/1155/Add.13  
30 April 1974  
ENGLISH  
Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Thirty-first session

PERIODIC REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Reports on economic, social and cultural rights,  
for the period 1 July 1969-30 June 1973, received  
from Governments under Economic and Social Council  
resolution 1074 C (XXXIX)

	<u>Page</u>
Finland.....	2
Netherlands .....	11
Singapore .....	22

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS IN FINLAND  
1 July 1969 - 30 June 1973

I. MAIN POLICIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL RIGHTS

The development of educational and cultural services and the socio and economic progress are considered as factors influencing each other during the period from 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1973. Implementation of educational equality has been the set objective of educational development. The measures adopted for this purpose have been: (1) planning of compulsory, comprehensive nine-year education for all, (2) setting of the objectives for secondary education by extending the period of basic education and by abolishing the disparities between reforms within the educational system that are going to open access to higher education on the basis of individual interest and talents, and, (3) democratization of internal administration in secondary and higher education institutions.

Plans have been made for the promotion of cultural services by making these services available for increasingly wider population groups and by creating the necessary preconditions for the citizens own voluntary cultural activities and free expression of artistic talent.

II. MEASURES ADOPTED TO IMPLEMENT THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS SPECIAL AGENCIES' RESOLUTIONS ON EDUCATION AND CULTURE

will be discussed under items III. F., III. G. and IV.

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN CULTURAL RIGHTS IN THE LIGHT OF LEGISLATIVE MEASURES AND ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

F. The right to education

1. Right to free primary education

Every child has the right to education in Finland. Compulsory school attendance begins on the year in which the child reaches the age of 7 years and ends at the age of 16. The requirements of legislation are fulfilled when a pupil graduates from the primary school or acquires corresponding knowledge and skills in other ways. (See Appendix 2).

The Finnish basic education is undergoing a radical change. The three school units of the old school system: the primary school proper with six grades, the civic school with two (or three) grades and the 5-grade lower secondary school will be amalgamated into one 9-grade comprehensive school, common and compulsory for all children. (See Appendix 2).

The Act on the Basic Principles of the School System which lays down the structure of the new school entered into force on September 1, 1970. The curriculum for the new comprehensive school was issued in the same year. Extensive experimentation has been carried on all through the 1960's with the comprehensive type of schools. On 23 March, 1972, the Council of State approved a plan on the regional implementation of the comprehensive school.

The new 9-grade comprehensive school aims at raising the level of basic education to correspond to the level of the present-day lower secondary school education, as far as cognitive learning is concerned. But the educational aims and the approach to education differ from those of the traditional school system.

The new school system, based on the idea of comprehensive education, provides all children between seven and sixteen years of age with the same basic education of nine years' duration, irrespective of the disparities in their social and regional backgrounds. This education is compulsory, no tuition fees are collected and textbooks and other school supplies are free of-charge. A free school lunch and free transportation are provided. The school is a communal institution. It is the duty of each municipality to maintain staff and equip a sufficient number of schools.

One of the guiding principles of the comprehensive school is pupil-centred learning. Accordingly, the children are encouraged to self-expression and independent work. Attention is given to the development of individual creativity. These aims are best attained in a democratic school atmosphere, where friendly and close relations between teachers and pupils are prevalent.

2. Right to equal access to higher education on the basis of capacity or merit including technical, vocational and professional education

The legislation on the access to post-comprehensive school education has not been developed during the period from 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1973. Instead, significant preparatory work has been undertaken in order to innovate secondary education so that equal access to education, based on individual interest and talent, would be guaranteed for all.

On March 18, 1971, the Council of State appointed a committee which was assigned i.a. to determine the tasks of educational policy as a part of general social policy, to derive from these the aims for secondary education, and to submit a recommendation for an educational system suited to these aims. The Committee submitted its report 12 April 1973. No legislative measures have yet been resorted to on the basis of the report.

An Examination Planning Committee was appointed on 29 February 1972. The Committee submitted a proposal on (1) a reform and gradual abolition of the matriculation examination (leaving examination from the upper secondary school), (2) opening an access from vocational education to higher education, and (3) development of entrance examinations to the universities and institutions of higher education. On the basis of the committee report, the Ministry of Education recommended that the institutions of higher education should reserve certain quotas of student places for non-matriculated students.

Development of social aspects related to student life.

Social measures on increasing students' opportunities to avail themselves of higher education irrespective of their economic or social status have been adopted. A Student Aid Committee submitted its report in 1968. A new Student Aid Act was promulgated on 14 January 1972, and the Decree implementing the Act on 14 April 1974. Financial support for studies is provided in the form of grants from State funds and in the form of low-interest loans, where part of the interest is paid by the State, which also acts as guarantor.

The minimum length of vocational studies or studies in a higher education institution for which a State guaranteed loan may be granted is six months. The State guarantee and interest subsidy are granted for a loan intended to cover one-year study expenses at a time. The maximum amount of a student loan is based on the annual cost of studying, determined by the Council of State for each individual educational establishment. In 1972-1973 the maximum amount lent to any student was 4,800 Finnish marks per one school year. A State-guaranteed study loan is available for all students who meet the required qualifications laid down by a decree.

Another form of study support from the State funds, the study grant is not repaid by the receiver. The study grant is available for students who study at some of the institutions of higher education for minimum four months per term. The study grant is given for one year at a time. The maximum amount granted to students in higher education establishments was 700 Finnish marks per school year in 1972-1973. Study grants are given to about 20 per cent of all students. When a study grant is given, attention is paid to the applicant's progress in his studies and to his economic and social status.

Democratization of internal administration in secondary and higher education institutions.

Efforts have been made in order to develop the internal administration in the secondary and vocational schools and in the institutions of higher education in keeping with democratic principles. Students have had an opportunity to participate in the decision-making on questions concerning them in the school environment, particularly in the decision-making on planning and implementation of education. Attention has also been given to the improvement of students' legal security.

The Act on School Councils in the Secondary Schools was promulgated on 10 December 1971, and the Decree implementing the Act on 5 May 1972. (The Act on the School Councils in the Vocational Schools was promulgated in 1974).

The school councils are representative bodies, the members of which are elected from among the students and teachers in general and secret elections. The Councils are assigned to co-ordinate educational planning in the school; to maintain and promote co-operation within the school, between the school and the homes and between the school and society; to organize class meetings, subject meetings and the like; to assist school authorities in the supervision and development of the school; to enact the rules and regulations of the school; to develop socio-educational activities; to define the disciplinary punishments; to submit reports on request and recommendations on the matters concerning the school and the school activities. One half of the members of the school council are teachers, the other half students.

On 28 November 1969 the Council of State appointed a committee to investigate i.a. the questions related to university students' legal security and to drafted proposals for improvement of the system of legal security in addition to the other questions concerning legal security in the administration of the institutions of higher education. The committee was assigned to give particular attention to questions related i.a. to student selection, evaluation of examination performances and disciplinary punishments. The committee which was called the Committee on Legal Security in the Administration of the Institutions of Higher Education, submitted its report to the Council of State on 31 March 1971. The report includes a proposal for a bill on legal security in the institutions of higher education, with specific chapters on i.a. the following issues: Evaluation of theses and examination performances; student selection, disciplinary punishment; legal security adviser. An act on internal administration in the institutions of higher education is being prepared in the Ministry of Education.

3. Right of parents to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children

Within the traditional school system the parents have the right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. Transfer to the secondary school generally opens access to further studies at the institutions of higher education. Within the new comprehensive school system, the parents have the right to choose courses of varying length i.a. in languages and mathematics for their children. The comprehensive school curriculum is common for all students but there are also a few optional subjects. The social and economic status of the family exercise a definite influence on the choice of the kind of education and on the choice of the courses that vary in length in the comprehensive school. The children coming from higher social classes have an easier access to further education in secondary schools and, after the secondary school, in universities because of their families can provide them with sufficient financial resources and their environment is intellectually more stimulating than that of the children of the lower social strata. The children coming from upper social classes also choose longer courses in theoretic subjects than the children coming from lower social classes to the comprehensive school.

G. The right to participate in cultural life

1. The right to take part in cultural life and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications

During the period from 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1973, one of the objectives of Finnish cultural policy has been to guarantee equal rights to all citizens as regards participation in cultural life. No remarkable legislative measures have been resorted to in this field until the present but preparatory work to this end has been undertaken. The Council of State and the Ministry of Education have appointed committees representing various fields of culture for this purpose: Committee on Film Policy (17 February 1970); Committee on Cultural Activities (7 February 1971); Committee on Aid to Literature (19 April 1972); Committee on Opinion Papers (19 April 1972); Theatre Committee (4 May 1972); Orchestra Committee (15 June 1972) and a Committee on Education and Documentation of Pictorial Art (14 June 1974). All these committees (except the Committee on Film Policy) have submitted their reports which for the time being are being reported on by relevant authorities and discussed at the Ministry of Education.

2. Right to the protection of the moral and material interests arising out of scientific, literary or artistic work

The legislation on authors' rights has not been altered during the period from 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1973. Bills have, however, been drafted on this issue since 1970. In the autumn of 1970, the Council of State appointed a committee to revise the legislation on authors' rights in our country.

IV. ACTION WITH A VIEW TO ENSURE THAT THE RIGHTS REFERRED TO UNDER III ABOVE ARE ENJOYED BY INCREASING NUMBERS OF THE POPULATION AND WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF ANY KIND, SUCH AS RACE, COLOUR, SEX, LANGUAGE, RELIGION, POLITICAL OR OTHER OPINION, NATIONAL OR SOCIAL ORIGIN, PROPERTY, BIRTH OR OTHER STATUS

1. The right to education

The new comprehensive school system is being implemented gradually since 1972. Northern Finland and a number of municipalities in other parts of the country have already transferred to the new educational system. Other provinces will follow in an order stipulated by the Government. By 1977, the new comprehensive school system will substitute the traditional parallel school system in the whole country.

2. Right to equal access to higher education on the basis of capacity or merit including technical, vocational and professional education

Technical and vocational education

All citizens in Finland have the right to equal access to vocational education after general basic education. A profound investigation of the factors limiting access to vocational education has been made in the most recent years.

Because the number of first year student places is insufficient, all young persons desiring vocational education have not had access to it, and a remarkable number of young persons have entered the labour market without vocational training after basic general education. The number of student places has been remarkably increased in the last few years, and in 1973 the total of first year student places was approximately commensurate with the corresponding average age groups if the student places in the upper secondary schools are also taken into consideration. Access to further studies after the comprehensive school education is thus guaranteed for the age group that began to attend school in 1973 and for the subsequent age groups.

While the number of first year student places has been increased, regional distribution of education has also been a target of investigation. Because there has been great inequality between regions in this respect, new educational opportunities have been organized in those regions where the need for student places has been greatest.

A student's social background has also had a decisive influence on his participation in post-compulsory education. Therefore, measures have in the last few years been taken in order to abolish the financial obstacles limiting access to education: educational expenses paid by the students themselves have been reduced to minimum, the student aid system has been developed and extended also to vocational education.

During the period from 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1973, attention has been given to the factors debarring a person's access to those forms of vocational education that are mainly intended for one sex only. Practical arrangements within the educational institutions and changing of the prevailing attitudes have been used as means abolishing these factors. Students applying admission to vocational education institutes are, however, still guided by the traditional division of roles between a man and a woman.

In the recent development of educational opportunities, the right of different minority groups to get vocational education in their own mother tongue has been emphasized. Consequently, teaching in Swedish has been provided in such study lines where the language of instruction has traditionally been Finnish. The Samic (Lappish) population's opportunities to get education in their own language have also been improved.

#### Post-comprehensive general education

The upper secondary school leaving examination -- the matriculation examination -- is being gradually changed and will eventually be abolished in the present form. At the same time the student selection at universities and other institutions of higher education will be homogenized.

In 1972 the right to participate in the matriculation examination was extended to include persons that have passed a final examination in a vocational or technical school after 2-3 years of study, without preceding studies in the upper secondary school, or who have pursued and completed certain supplementary studies in a foreign language and in the second national language (Finland is a bi-lingual country).

Passing of the matriculation examination also after certain vocational studies renders it possible for the student to change one's study field and opens an access to further education. At present, a certain quota of student places is reserved to students seeking admission to universities directly from vocational or technical schools without an intervening matriculation examination. This procedure gives the students an opportunity to pursue further studies in his previous special field. The procedure has been applied in medical, commercial, agricultural and forestry education as well as in natural sciences and mathematics. The size of the quota reserved for non-matriculated students in each study subject varied between 5 to 15 per cent of the total number of student places in 1973.

Because the number of student places is not commensurate with the number of applicants seeking admission, the institutions of higher education and universities will have to select students for a few more years, giving preference to applicants with outstanding school-leaving certificates and high-level performance in the matriculation examination.

#### Social development

The State has taken measures to support students by means of providing them with direct and indirect student aid. Direct student aid has been given in the form of study grants and study loans. Indirect student aid comprises provision of student housing, students' health care, students' restaurants and the day care services for students' children.

#### Democratization of administration

There is a school council in all secondary schools. (School councils will begin their activities also in vocational education institutions starting 1 January 1975).

G. The right to participate in cultural life

The following reports and proposals have been submitted to the Council of State on promotion of cultural services:

- (1) a report on the availability of cultural services for different population groups, giving particular attention to the respondents' age and place of residence, and on their participation in certain cultural activities (Cf. Appendix 1 on p. 11).
- (2) a report on improved regional equality in the availability of cultural services, and on the citizens' rights to voluntary participation in and contribution to cultural activities.
- (3) a proposal on the development of organization and distribution of cultural services so that these services would be available for all citizens and meet their needs for cultural activity.

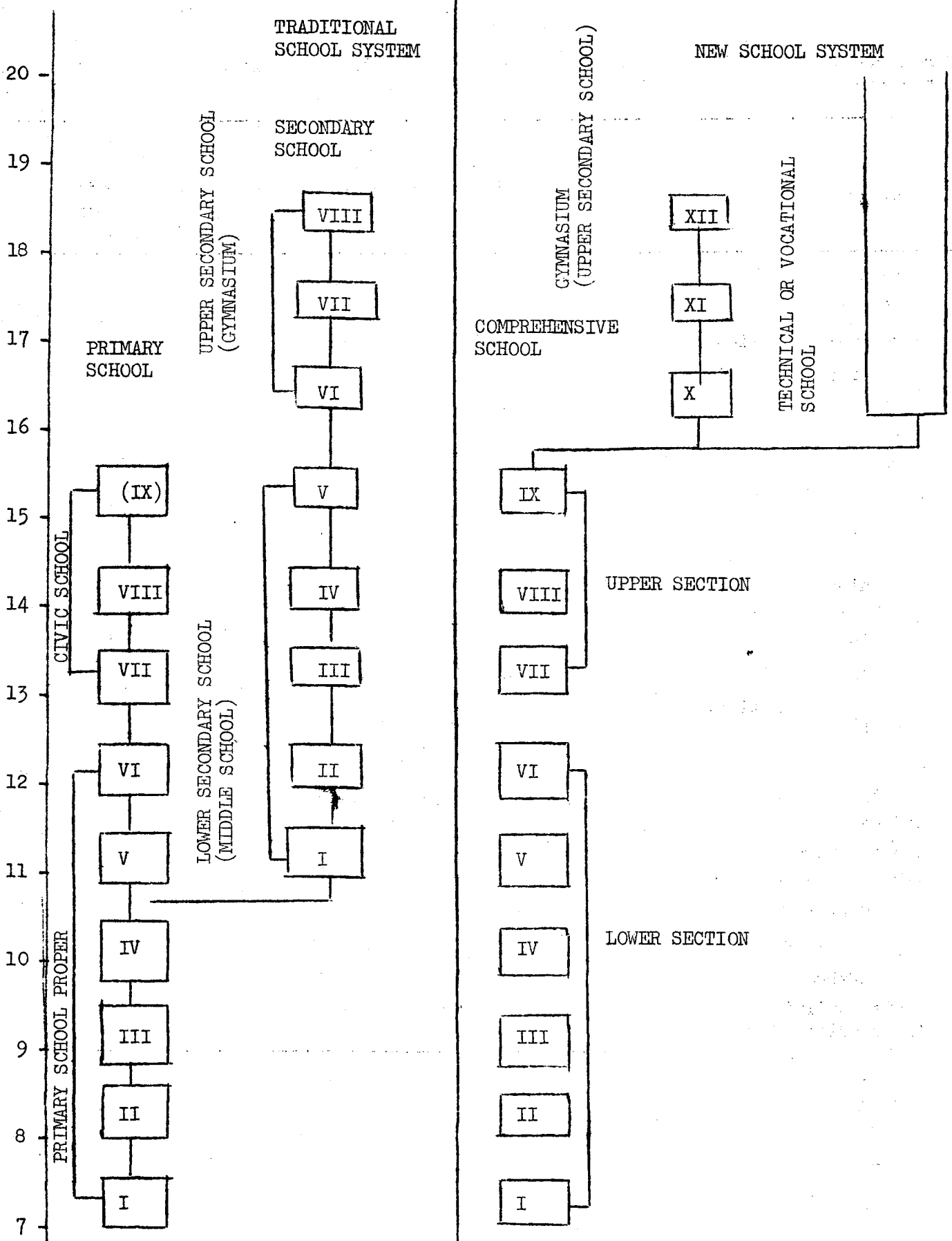


Appendix 1

Percentages of persons participating, persons interested and persons who are not at all interested in a number of leisure activities in 1969

Leisure activity	Percentage of participants	Percentage of persons interested	Percentage of persons not participating nor interested
Television	58	33	9
Radio	60	35	6
Newspapers, dailies	70	25	5
Periodicals, magazines, journals	55	36	10
Books	34	44	22
Dance	18	39	43
Folk and country dance	3	22	74
Ballet, opera	3	14	83
Recitation, passive listening	5	22	73
Recitation, active reciting	2	10	87
Drawing, painting	8	28	64
Fine arts (painting, sculpture)	2	16	81
Music	29	47	24
Theatre, drama (audient)	27	46	27
Theatre, drama (amateur actor)	5	12	83
Motion pictures	32	49	19
Essay-writing	8	10	82
Photography	17	35	47
Amateur filming (substantial films)	3	16	82

Appendix 2



NETHERLANDS

Periodic Reports on Human Rights

(1 July 1969-30 June 1973)

Realization of social, economic and cultural rights

I. Introductory Statement

The realization of social, economic and cultural rights is directly bound up with the three-fold objective of full employment, economic growth and a fair distribution of income.

The objective of full employment was not quite reached during the period under review. The official unemployment figures, after an initial drop, showed an increase between 1970 and the end of the reference period. Action was, however, taken by the Government to reverse this trend and restore the balance on the labour market. In the process, efforts were directed at both maintaining as high a national level of employment as possible and achieving an even spread of employment opportunities over the various regions of the country.

Economic growth continued during the period under review. The resultant macro-economic spending margin was used to a large extent for the benefit of the community. The economic growth was therefore of vital importance to the expansion of government welfare measures and the social security system.

The objective of a fair distribution of income was more directly instrumental in shaping socio-economic policy during the reference period than was formerly the case. Especially in the latter years of this period it became a major theme in the dialogues conducted between management and unions with a view to containing the rise in wages and incomes. This development led to increased concern for the status of the lowest-paid echelons. Personal income was regarded as a less predominant factor than it had been previously, and in the assessment of government expenditure account was taken to an ever-increasing extent of the degree to which the lower income brackets benefited thereby.

Government policy showed a growing awareness that traditional indicators such as economic growth, increase in real income, etc. could no longer suffice to assess the welfare of the people. On the labour front this was manifested by a growing concern for the non-material aspects of working conditions. Policy was aimed at promoting an optimal working environment, with close attention being paid to those features of the working scene which constitute a threat to the mental and physical health of workers. Another no less important element of this policy was geared to achieving greater employee participation. Further progress was made at the level of individual enterprises with the enactment of new legislation governing works councils.

Further, increasing attention was paid to the vulnerable position which, for various reasons, certain categories occupy in the overall labour force, e.g. handicapped, female, foreign and young workers.

## II. Influence of United Nations instruments

By virtue of an Act passed on 18 February 1971 Netherlands legislation was brought into line where necessary with the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The relevant Act covers discrimination in the economic sector. The text is given in document CERD/C/R.50/Add.4, Annex I.

A Bill is shortly to be introduced to give effect to ILO Convention No. 100 providing for equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.

## III. Significant developments

### A. The right to work

1. By and large, workers in the Netherlands are liable to Section 6 of the Employment Relationship (Special Powers) Decree, 1954, under which they are not allowed to terminate their current employment without permission from the local employment office, on pain of annulment of the resignation tendered.

Subject to such permission, which is seldom refused, workers are free to choose any work they wish (sc. within the limits of their skills and possibilities). The only restriction on their choice may lie in a lack of demand for workers in a given branch, which is therefore an economic restriction.

2. Labour legislation in the Netherlands contains multiple guarantees of the right to just and favourable conditions of work.

The relative provisions govern service regulations, payment of wages, termination of employment, working hours and conditions and worker participation. These rules are universally valid and therefore apply to all workers. From time to time the relevant legislation is updated. For example a Bill prohibiting dismissal on the grounds of marriage, pregnancy or confinement is currently before Parliament.

On 1 April 1971 the Works Councils Act, regulating anew the worker participation issue, entered into force. The Act applies to all private undertakings, including non-profit-making bodies, with a staff of one hundred or more. Employee participation is ensured through a works council, whose members are elected from among the staff and which is presided over by a director of the undertaking. The Act lays down that undertakings must secure the agreement of the works council when framing service regulations, pension, profit-sharing and savings schemes, work and holiday schedules, and safety, health and hygiene measures.

The Act also provides for consultation of the works council in several other cases, e.g. in the event of mergers and reorganization schemes. The Act further affords ample legal protection to the members of works councils.

On 1 June 1971 an Act regulating the structure of business firms came into force containing, inter alia, new provisions governing the composition and powers of the Boards of large companies, i.e. those with a staff of one hundred or more, subscribed capital plus reserves of ten million guilders or more and a works council set up in virtue of legal requirements. In pursuance of this Act works councils are empowered to put forward nominees to the Board and can, moreover, by virtue of a right of veto, oppose the appointment of a nominee put forward by the shareholders or directors.

On 1 January 1971 legislation amending the law on company investigations was implemented under which not only shareholders but also trade unions can, in the event of mismanagement of a company, petition the courts to institute an inquiry into the company's policy and operations. If it is found that there has been mismanagement the courts can take a number of drastic measures, including suspension or dismissal of company directors.

3. In order to implement the right to protection against unemployment and underemployment, a system of additional measures in the field of providing employment as part of the total range of employment services is developed.

Additional measures in the field of providing employment are in the first place meant for people whose unemployment is obviously of a temporary nature, and for whom it is important that they should not lose (part of) their routine, knowledge and other aspects of employability as a result of their unemployment.

An important form of special measures in the field of providing employment is Supplementary Employment, which is a scheme under which temporary subsidies are granted (not to the workers themselves) in order to render it possible to carry out certain projects, thus effectuating the direct employment of unemployed workers, who in principle are fully fit workers.

Annual programmes for the various categories of supplementary employment are drawn up on the basis of the available budget and on the basis of the need for these projects which is to be expected in the different regions.

The following types of programmes can be distinguished:

- (a) programme for building works, e.g. projects of the Service in charge of the control of public buildings, the construction of swimming pools, sports halls, etc.;
- (b) programmes for land amelioration, road construction and water works;
- (c) programmes for simple projects for older unemployed workers marked out for navy work, etc., consisting, e.g. of the construction of sports grounds, small playgrounds, clearing up fallow land, land cultivation, tidying up grass verges, forestry work, etc.;
- (d) programmes for projects in the clerical sector.

As to subsidizing of Supplementary Employment, the following criteria apply:

- (a) for building works in the sector of public utility building or in the sector of land amelioration, road construction and hydraulic engineering projects, 50-95 per cent of the subsidizable costs minus the gains;
- (b) the subsidies for simple projects for the benefit of older workers, which projects only require small costs in respect of tools and equipment, currently amount to 445 guilders per man/week;
- (c) the subsidies for projects in the clerical sector amount to 95 per cent of the wage total and of the costs relating thereto.

Within the framework of additional measures in the field of providing employment other measures can be taken.

- (a) under the subsidy scheme for older workers a subsidy amounting to 35 per cent of the wage total may be granted to employers who are prepared to conclude a permanent contract of employment with workers aged 50 and over, whom they originally did not want to engage in view of their age;
- (b) the Temporary Employment Regulation provides for the placement of the same category of workers in the temporary service of federal, provincial and municipal governments;
- (c) under the scheme for housepainting in certain cases, and only in areas where there is a certain degree of unemployment, the Ministry participates in the subsidy which the Industrial Board grants each winter for a number of weeks towards the costs of painting the interiors of houses, carried out in the private and commercial sector;
- (d) in certain cases it may be necessary in order to reduce the unemployment rate in a certain branch of economic activity to place a government order at an earlier date;
- (e) the question is being investigated as to whether and to what extent it is desirable and feasible to keep going industries which are threatened with sudden closures and which are not eligible for any other form of government subsidy;
- (f) specifically for the benefit of older unemployed workers a manpower agency not only provides suitable employment for those concerned, but also endeavours to have these employees, initially engaged temporarily, accepted on a permanent basis.

4. In pursuance of the Minimum Wage and Minimum Holiday Allowance Act, which entered into force on 23 February 1969, all workers between the ages of 24 and 65 inclusive employed during more than one third of the normal working hours are entitled to a minimum wage, regardless of sex. Without prejudice to possible increases on the grounds of special circumstances, provision was made for adjustment of this minimum rate on 1 July of every year in accordance with the average rise in collectively agreed wages and the general price index. With effect from 1 July 1970 entitlement to the minimum wage was extended to workers of 23 years of age, and since 1 January 1972 the minimum wage has been subject to twice-yearly adjustments to the trend in collectively agreed rates (viz. on 1 January and 1 July). With effect from 1 January 1974 a provision was written into the Act entitling male and female workers between the ages of 15 and 22 inclusive to a given percentage of the minimum wage. The actual entitlement is determined by means of a reduction factor of 7.5 per cent of the full minimum wage, applied progressively to each age-bracket below the 23-year threshold.

During the period under review the minimum wage rose by virtue of the aforesaid adjustments from Dfl. 606.70 per month to Dfl. 1,049.10 per month.

5. ILO Convention No. 100 concerning equal remuneration for male and female workers for work of equal value was ratified on 16 June 1971. The Convention entered into force one year later. A Bill covering the subject of equal pay for men and women is expected to be introduced in 1974.

In this context reference is made to the Minimum Wage and Minimum Holiday Allowance Act mentioned under 4. above, by virtue of which equal minimum pay has been fully attained.

In 1973 only under a few collective labour agreements covering work not currently performed by workers of both sexes had the principle of equal pay still not been fully achieved.

6. With effect from 23 June 1971 the Paid Holidays Act of 14 July 1966 was amended giving all workers of 18 years of age and over the right after one year's employment to paid leave amounting to at least three times (instead of twice) the number of days worked per week (i.e. three weeks holiday).

Young workers under 18 years of age on 1 May of the current calendar year are entitled to four weeks.

A minimum holiday of 20 days has been agreed under most collective labour contracts. Young workers are on average entitled to three days more than adult workers.

Under numerous collective labour agreements the ordinary working week for manual workers was reduced to 41 1/4 hours. For office workers a standard working week of 40 to 41 1/4 hours applies.

In this context reference is also made to the Hours of Work and Rest for Ship's Crew Act of 21 June 1973, in virtue of which hours of work and rest for ship's crew can be laid down by statutory instrument.

7. In the Netherlands there are no personal restrictions of any kind with regard to trade unions. Trade unions may be set up freely. Everyone is entitled if he so wishes to join with others in forming a trade union. Prior government agreements to the setting up of a trade union is not required. Similarly, the right to membership of the trade union of one's choice is guaranteed. Any provisions in a collective labour agreement prescribing or prohibiting of a given trade union would be null and void. Large numbers of workers are members of trade unions. In the event of restraints on membership of trade unions being imposed in practice by employers, the power of the unions themselves is sufficient to protect the rights of individual workers. Trade unions in the Netherlands therefore perform a vital function in the socio-economic life of the country and have been doing so for many years now.

8. There are no developments to report with reference to the period under review which brought about any material change in the situation as regards the right to strike.

As in the past, the right to strike, while not guaranteed under the Constitution or any statutory enactment, remained in practice a recognized right of workers under certain circumstances. However, although the collective character of strike action is admitted, legally, participation in a strike is a breach of contract between employer and employee.

In principle, such a breach constitutes default, and associated trade union action incitement to default. Nevertheless post-1960 case-law has allowed workers the right to cease work when they cannot be expected to continue performing prescribed work for compelling reasons connected with the relation between employer and employee.

In view of the fact that court rulings as compared with those prior to 1960 were considered to be still potentially too restrictive as regards the right of workers, a Bill was introduced in 1966 designed to extend the scope of the right to strike.

Doubts however arose whether the Bill, and in particular the projected criteria it contained would bring about in practice the desired extension as far as court rulings were concerned. As a result the parliamentary reading of the Bill was delayed.

Draft legislation introduced in 1970 for the abolition of the penalties currently imposable (though never actually imposed to date) on strike action on the part of public servants is likely to be passed in the near future.

Lastly, the intention was announced in May 1973 to proceed to the early ratification of the European Social Charter, which recognizes the right to collective action in labour disputes.

B. The right to social security, including social insurance in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond one's control

Noteworthy under this head is the ratification by the Netherlands on 27 October 1969 of ILO Convention No. 128 concerning invalidity, old age and survivor's benefits.

Legislation was enacted on 14 September 1970 under which a death grant is payable to survivors of workers and other persons who were in receipt of sickness, disability or unemployment benefits.

Other events included the entry into force on 1 January 1973 of the General Convention relating to social security concluded between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Morocco on 14 February 1972 and the administrative agreement concerning the mode of application of this convention, signed on 3 November 1972.

These agreements guarantee nationals of each Contracting Party equal treatment under the other Party's national social security legislation and the payment of the benefits to which they or their heirs are entitled, regardless of where they are employed or domiciled.

The Provision of Sheltered Employment Act entered into force on 1 January 1969.

In the middle of 1973 a fairly drastic change was introduced with regard to sheltered employment. The change relates to the temporary status of employment in what are known as B-category jobs. Persons who are not likely to be capable of one third of a reasonable minimum performance in normal employment after appropriate vocational training are now eligible for permanent employment in B-category jobs.

The number of persons in sheltered employment had risen to almost 50,000 by the middle of 1973.

The Act governing benefits for the 1940-1945 victims of persecution has been in force since 1 January 1973.

This Act superseded the Consolidated Ordinance covering the same matter, which was framed in pursuance of the National Assistance Act.



Victims of persecution within the meaning of the Act are those who were persecuted on account of race, creed or ideology by the powers occupying the Netherlands and the former Netherlands East Indies during the Second World War. Persecution is defined as deprivation of freedom or the need to go into hiding or undergo sterilization to avoid being deprived of freedom. Benefits are granted where the victims of such persecution as a result have become unfit to work.

The rate of the allowance depends, inter alia, on income before the event and current income. Compensation is also payable for the cost of medical treatment and nursing of sickness or defects incurred on account of acts of persecution and for directly associated additional costs in respect of essential facilities.

Victims are further eligible for payment towards defrayal of the cost of other facilities designed to improve their circumstances.

A benefit is also payable to the widows of victims deceased as a result of persecution.

C. The right to an adequate standard of living

2. The aim of public housing policy is to ensure that adequate housing is available to all sectors of the population at rents within their means. Of particular importance in the achievement of this aim is the rent and subsidy policy pursued.

Although over 2 million new dwellings were completed in the post-war years, and although the Netherlands is among the leading nations in Europe as regards the number of dwellings completed per 1,000 inhabitants, at the end of the nineteen-sixties the abatement of the housing shortage progressed more slowly than was anticipated on account of the growing population, the steadily diminishing size of families, the demand for improved standards of accommodation, etc. Nevertheless, the progress made was considerable. Despite adverse conditions (heavy increases in building costs coupled with a rise in interest rates to an unprecedented level), house construction in 1969 and 1970 fell only slightly short of the targets set, i.e. by approximately 123,000 and 117,000 units respectively. Partly because of the slowdown in other building sectors and favourable weather conditions the output showed a marked rise in the subsequent years. Approximately 137,000, 152,000 and 155,000 units were completed in 1971, 1972 and 1973 respectively. More than 80 per cent of the dwellings built during the period under review were State-subsidized.

In view of the high figures reached as regards the number of units constructed, it was subsequently possible to pay greater attention to shortcomings in housing standards. Since 1968 housebuilding standards have been improved by virtue of the extra subsidies granted for experimental housing projects. Moreover, increasing attention is being paid to the accommodation needs of specific categories such as senior citizens. Initially the accent was on the construction of communal accommodation, but in about 1970 the building of this kind of accommodation was curbed in favour of individual dwellings for the elderly. The latter years of the reference period witnessed a growing awareness of the parallel need for small dwellings to satisfy the specific requirements of other categories (such as single people, married couples, defective households, etc.). Housing policy has therefore been aimed to an increasing extent at satisfying this need.

The fact that the housing shortage had been overcome by the end of 1960 meant that, in the period under review, not only was it possible to devote more attention to the construction of new dwellings to meet the demand for higher housing standards, but at the same time an increased effort could be made to improve old dwellings. High priority

has been given to urban renewal in the past years. At the outset efforts were concentrated on large-scale, systematic demolition and redevelopment. But so drastic was the action and so long the time required to implement it that it had adverse effects on urban viability. Subsequent thinking on the urban renewal process attached increasing importance to the residential aspect as well as to the need for services and cultural and educational activities.

Accordingly, in the course of the reference period, the central government's overall subsidized building policy was oriented more specifically towards a process of urban restoration, i.e. the systematic and properly co-ordinated improvement of the housing and residential features of the older sections of towns and cities.

A serious problem in the context of public housing policy lies in the fact that the rents for new dwellings are disproportionately higher than those chargeable in a large number of cases for older dwellings, which, under the rent control regulations, have only just begun to be progressively adjusted to rising building costs. As a result, many families already living in independent accommodation are disinclined to move into relatively expensive newly built accommodation, even though it might be better suited to their needs as far as size and amenities are concerned. This is still preventing a large supply of cheap housing from becoming available. So young families who cannot yet really afford to pay high rents are now, in many cases, nevertheless forced to resort to dearer, newly built accommodation.

In the circumstances, a number of legal provisions were enacted in 1971 with a view to achieving a balanced rent structure. As a follow-up to the gradual easing of rent and house allocation controls initiated as early as 1967, these provisions are designed to bring about a phased adjustment of rents chargeable for older dwellings to reduce the disproportion between the latter and the rents for new housing. In the process, account will however be taken of differences in the standard of amenities, etc.

In addition to these efforts to ensure a more satisfactory distribution of accommodation, action was also taken during the reference period in the area of subsidization policy, with a view to easing the housing problems in particular of people in the lower income brackets.

As had already been noted, more than 80 per cent of new housing completed in the period 1969-1973 was State-subsidized. Even so, there was a risk of this new housing becoming progressively less accessible to people in the lower income brackets on account of the increased building costs entailed by the higher standards of new constructions.

Consequently, a start was made in 1972 on the introduction of a system of additional individual subsidies for rent-payers.

Government subsidies are also granted for restoration projects, and the relevant provisions were supplemented and improved in the course of the period under review.

3. State-subsidized services include general welfare agencies operating, inter alia, for the benefit of families, and special welfare agencies operating, inter alia, for the benefit of unmarried mothers and senior citizens.

On 28 April 1971 a new State subsidy scheme for community development work came into force. The whole scheme is designed to create conditions, structures and relationships which will foster social and cultural activities in the community on the part of its members. Citizen participation is therefore a central aim. This aim is pursued by means of (1) information, (2) promotion of social skills, (3) stimulation of

self-activity, (4) support of popular initiative, (5) encouragement of dialogues between authorities and citizens, etc. The physical infrastructure for community development is also provided for in the form of the construction of facilities for various purposes, including indoor swimming pools, sports centres, socio-cultural service centres, etc. Particular attention is paid to work in older urban districts, work on behalf of cultural minority groups and work on behalf of socially and culturally backward areas.

5. The legal status of Netherlands citizens with regard to environmental matters was greatly enhanced by a government decision to allow wide citizen participation in the framing of environment policy at national, provincial and municipal level. The Government considers it of major importance that decisions affecting the structure and quality of the human environment should not be taken unless everyone concerned has been afforded an opportunity of taking part in their formulation.

D. The right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

1. Childcare services, already in operation for many years, continued and extended their activities.

Recent developments include screening for phenylketonuria and audio-visual disorders.

The infant mortality rate dropped to 12.7 per 1,000 live births, perinatal mortality to 16.6 per 1,000 births in 1971 (19.6 per 1,000 in 1969) and maternal mortality to 1.0 per 10,000 births in 1972 (1.9 per 10,000 in 1969).

Some 95 per cent of children were vaccinated against smallpox, diphtheria, whooping-cough, tetanus and poliomyelitis. Vaccination against German measles and measles is currently being introduced.

3. The incidence of infectious disease was reduced to a very low level. By virtue of a monitoring system, minor outbreaks can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

Screening capability is being extended, for instance, to cover cardio-vascular diseases. Industrial medical services and T.B. clinics are actively involved in this process.

4. Medical care is available to the whole population thanks to an even dispersal of medical units and personnel throughout the country.

The number of doctors, now 13 per 10,000 inhabitants is likely to increase in the years ahead. Financially, access to medical services is guaranteed by a health insurance system, which at present covers over 70 per cent of the people and will probably be expanded to cover the whole population.

E. The right of the family, motherhood and childhood to protection and assistance

3. The Employment of Young People Decree of 21 November 1972 prohibits the employment of young people not only on work that is detrimental to the health but also work that may have adverse effects on their spiritual well-being.

The right to special care and assistance is guaranteed in practice by subsidization of the preventive child-protection work performed by child and family welfare agencies. These agencies are in many cases units of the Pro Juventute

Organization, other units of which are engaged on child and family supervision work under the judicial child protection system. In order to guarantee the same right to adolescents, appropriate facilities are being provided, inter alia, by the subsidizing of 10 Young Advisory Centres. These centres operate on the principle of the adolescent's independent right to assistance without any interference from parents, judicial supervisors or foster parents.

Where desirable, the centres will even go so far as to preserve the anonymity of adolescents seeking their advice.

4. By subsidization of bureaux where advice can be sought on birth control and sexual problems an effort is being deployed to promote the said freedom and self-responsibility of parent and future parents, and also to provide public assistance by means of guidance and information on contraception and family planning.

#### F. The right to education

1. Under the subsidy scheme covering children of inland waterway and fairground operators (Ministerial Order of 30 December 1970) subsidies are payable towards the cost of accommodation for children of schoolgoing age belonging to migratory families, who cannot therefore live at home during term-time. This scheme consequently ensures the exercise of the right to education on the part of this category.

2. By legislation enacted on 30 December 1970 provision was made for the 100 per cent subsidization of non-State universities and other institutions offering higher education facilities.

An Act passed on 6 May 1971 introduced primarily for the sake of young working people the obligation to undergo continued education on one or more days a week after termination of compulsory education (with effect from 1972 for a further period of two years).

#### G. The right to participate freely in cultural life

2. The amended Copyright Act, 1972, entered into force on 7 January 1973.

Of significance in this connexion are Sections 16b and 17, which regulate the photocopying of works protected by copyright. The relevant provisions are based on the premise that the holder of a copyright is entitled to fair payment in such cases. The new Section 25 concerning the moral right of authors is also noteworthy. The author of a work is entitled to oppose:

- (a) its being published under a name other than his own;
- (b) its being otherwise altered;
- (c) its being in any way distorted, mutilated or impaired.

The amendment of Section 25 is partly bound up with the ratification of the 1948 Brussels text of the Berne Convention.

IV. Action with a view to ensure that the rights referred to under III above are enjoyed by increasing numbers of the population and without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status

The very gist of the action described under III above is to ensure enjoyment of the relevant social, economic and cultural rights by all concerned without any discrimination.

A cogent example is the Minimum Wage Act, which guarantees the right to a minimum wage for specific categories of workers regardless of sex.

The same applies to the legislation implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (see document CERD/C/R.50/Add.4 for the text of the relevant provisions). The Bill abolishing the liability of public servants to penalties in the event of their resorting to strike action is also to be viewed from this angle.

SINGAPORE

PERIODIC REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND REPORTS ON  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION: REPORT ON ECONOMIC,  
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS DURING THE PERIOD  
1 JULY 1969 TO 30 JUNE 1973

I. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

1. During this period under review i.e., 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1973, the Government continued its efforts to improve the economic and social well-being of its people with the same kind of sustained vigour as in the past. A number of important measures were adopted during the period to advance this objective.

2. In view of the smallness of our geographic size, the Government recognized the fact that in order to ensure the continued economic and social well-being of its people, there was a need to control population growth. This was necessary in order not to negate whatever economic growth that had been achieved. Two Acts were passed during this period with this purpose in mind. The Voluntary Sterilization Act, 1969 established a Board to authorize treatment for voluntary sterilization, subject to certain safeguards on medical, social or eugenic grounds. The Act also provided for such treatment in certain specified circumstances without the authority of the Board. It came into force on 20 March 1970 and was valid initially for four years. Its validity has since been extended for one further year, at the end of which a study and a decision would be made to determine whether the provisions of the Act should be made to have effect permanently.

3. The Abortion Act, 1969 reformed and liberalized the law relating to abortion and allowed, subject to safeguards, abortion to be carried out on the ground, inter alia, that the family and financial circumstances of the pregnant woman, both at the time when the child would be born and thereafter, so far as was foreseeable, justified the termination of her pregnancy.

4. The latter half of this period under review witnessed a much higher rate of increase in the cost of living. In order to secure to employees the necessary wages to meet the higher cost of living and to give them a share of the benefits of economic development, a National Wages Council was established. This Council was a tripartite body consisting of representatives from the Government, the employers and the workers. The Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Act, 1971 increased considerably the compensation payable to a workman or his family on account of death or injuries sustained by him in the course of his work.

II. GENERAL SURVEY

A. The right to work

5. There were no legal fetters which limited the right of a worker to free choice of employment. Every worker was entitled to seek a job commensurate with his qualifications, experience and inclination.

6. The right to just and favourable conditions of work was enshrined in various pieces of labour legislation. The principal legislation, the Employment Act (Cap 122 1970 Ed.) provided for uniform terms and conditions of employment for all categories of workers covered by the Act. The Act also regulated the conditions under which young persons and female workers were to be employed besides generally providing for the health, accommodation and medical care of all workers.
7. Workers injured at work and incapacitated received compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act (Cap. 130, 1970 Ed.) for the whole period of incapacity. Where permanent disablement arose, further compensation was payable to the injured workmen. In cases of fatal injury compensations were also paid to the families of the deceased workers. The compensation payable to a workman under this Act was considerably increased by an Amendment Act referred to in paragraph 4 above.
8. The Central Provident Fund Act (Cap. 121, 1970 Ed.) provided for compulsory contribution by both employers and workers towards the retirement benefits of the workers. Up to 30 June 1973, the monthly contribution amounted to 24 per cent of their salaries, 13 per cent of which was contributed by the employer. Members were allowed to utilize their savings in the Fund to purchase approved flats for their own occupation.
9. There were no legal or administrative provisions concerning protection against unemployment or underemployment. However, the Government maintained an Employment Service, with 3 branch offices, to assist unemployed persons to find employment.
10. The amount of remuneration payable to a worker was governed by the interplay of free market forces since there was no minimum wage legislation in Singapore. The Employment Act, however, provided for the protection of wages against unauthorized deductions and stipulated that wages earned by an employee should be paid before the expiry of the 7th day after the last day of the salary period. Complaints could be lodged by employees at the Labour Ministry to recover unauthorized deductions from wages and wages wrongfully withheld by the employer.
11. In the light of the Republic's continued economic development, the National Wages Council recommended an 8 per cent wage increase effective from 1 July 1972. This was subsequently raised to 9 per cent effective from 1 July 1973. These recommendations were designed to ensure that the workers were given a fair share for their efforts in developing the economy and to tide them over current inflationary pressures.
12. The right to equal pay for equal work was a recognized feature of employment in Singapore, both in the public sector and generally in the private sector. There was no discrimination in respect of race, colour, creed or sex when determining the rate of pay.
13. The right to rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay was provided for in the Employment Act which stipulated a weekly rest day and a uniform 44 hour working week for all employees with adequate time for meal break and rest during working hours. The Act also provided for 7 or 14 days of annual leave with pay for employees, depending on their length of service. In addition, employees were granted 11 gazetted holidays with pay each year.

14. The right of workers to form trade unions and to join the trade union of one's choice was enshrined in the Employment Act and the Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 124, 1970 Ed.). The Employment Act provided that nothing in any contract of service should in any way restrict the right of any employee who was a party to such contract -

- (a) to join a registered trade union; or
- (b) to participate in the activities of a registered trade union, whether as an officer of such trade union or otherwise; or
- (c) to associate with any other persons for the purpose of organizing a trade union in accordance with the provisions of the Trade Unions Act.

Under the Industrial Relations Act, a person who, by conferring or procuring or offering to confer or procure any advantage on or for any person, induced or attempted to induce a person not to become a member or officer of a trade union or an association that has applied to be registered as a trade union, or to cease to be a member of a trade union or of any such association, would be guilty of an offence.

15. With the exception of workers employed in three essential services, namely water, gas and electricity services, the right to strike was enjoyed by all workers in both the public and private sector. This right was embodied in the Trade Disputes Act (Cap. 128, 1970 Ed.) which provided that an agreement or combination by two or more persons to do or procure to be done, any act in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute between employers and employees should not be punishable as a conspiracy if such act committed by one person would not be punishable as a crime, nor can an act done in pursuance of an agreement or combination by two or more persons for the same purpose be actionable unless the act, if done without such agreement or combination, would be actionable.

16. With regard to handicapped or disabled persons, they did often encounter considerable difficulties in finding and retaining suitable employment. On the whole employers were reluctant to employ such persons. In order to assist such persons, the Department of Social Welfare established a Rehabilitation Unit in 1969 with the main function of assisting the employable handicapped to find suitable employment. In furtherance of this objective the Department was considering the establishment of a training centre in the near future for physically and mentally handicapped persons to train as many such persons as possible in some suitable trade or craft which would eventually help them to find suitable employment.

#### B. Social Security

17. Social security or social insurance in the event of unemployment was non-mandatory. However, unemployed persons were assisted by the Labour Ministry's Employment Service to find employment. In the case of workers who became destitute through unemployment, they could receive financial assistance from the Social Welfare Department. In addition the aged, the advanced TB patients, the chronic sick, the physically and mentally handicapped and widows and orphans were also eligible to obtain financial assistance from the Department. The rates of financial assistance



were increased in January 1973. Those who were of unsound mind or were physically or mentally incapacitated from ever continuing in any employment were entitled to withdraw their savings from the Central Provident Fund. In the case of workers who sustained injuries at work and were incapacitated, they were entitled to workmen's compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Aged workers could withdraw their savings in the Central Provident Fund on reaching the age of 55 years to tide them over their old age.

C. The right to an adequate standard of living

18. The categories of persons most likely to be deprived of a right to an adequate standard of living were the unemployed, the sick, the handicapped, the widows and orphans, as well as the aged and destitute persons.

19. The disbursement of financial assistance to these categories of persons (with exception of the destitute persons) did provide them with a source of income for the purchase of food, clothing and other necessities. In addition, the Social Welfare Department also provided institutional facilities for the aged who were unable to take care of themselves or were not able to live on their own for medical psychological or social reasons. Destitute persons were also accommodated in Social Welfare Homes, or were given cash assistance, admitted to hospitals or assisted to return to their own country.

20. During the last 15 years, the number of aged persons in Singapore had been increasing. The 1970 census, for example, showed that about one out of every 20 persons was in the age group of 60 years and above and this figure was about twice that of the 1957 census figures. Moreover, the proportion of the aged in Singapore was likely to increase in the future as those in the 50-55 age group formed about 6.6 per cent of the total population. Apart from the growing number in the ranks of the aged, one of the structural changes emerging in Singapore family life which would have repercussions on the aged was the abandonment by the young of the traditional concept that all persons in the same family should live under one roof. Newly-married couples tended to set up their own homes, and became independent of their parents, leaving the elders with no one to look after them in their old age. Moreover, the increase in public housing with its limitations on family size and resettlement schemes affecting slums, tenements, kampongs and other squatter areas, had also accelerated the disintegration of the joint family system.

21. These social and demographic changes had no doubt left a growing number of aged with no one to care for them. The Department attempted to cope with this by the opening of two new dormitories in 1972 in one of the Homes for the Aged. In addition, it co-operated closely with the Singapore Council of Social Service to improve the conditions of privately run Homes providing residential care for the aged. At the same time, there was a growing category of aged who were able to take care of themselves physically and had some form of income, but were without normal family care or due to one reason or another was unable to live with their families and were left to their own resources. The Department was considering the feasibility of initiating services and facilities to cater to the need of this category of aged and ensuring that adequate provisions were also made for their food, clothing and housing.

D. The right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

Steps taken with a view to ensuring:

22. The reduction of the still-birth rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child. The Singapore Government provides comprehensive maternal and child health and school health services within the reach and means of every one in the Republic. The Maternal & Child Health Service provides, through its 46 Clinics scattered all over the island, ante-natal, post-natal and pre-school child care while about 80 per cent of all deliveries take place in Government Hospitals. The School Health Service provides routine medical examination of school children in schools, while outpatient primary medical treatment for school children is provided by the 4 school clinics and the 27 general out-patient clinics. This outpatient medical care is backed up by Paediatrics Units in Government Hospitals.

The comprehensiveness and the quality of the service are reflected by the very low infant mortality rate of 20.3 infant deaths per thousand live-births and the low still-birth rate of 7.9 still-births per thousand live-births and still-births in 1973.

23. The Improvement of all aspects of Environmental Hygiene  
(1 July 1969 - 30 June 1975)

As Singapore progresses with rapid urbanization and industrialization, the problem of environmental control becomes more complex. Coupled with a warm and humid climate which offers ideal ecological conditions for rapid multiplication of micro-organisms, decomposition of organic matter and propagation of disease-bearing insects, a co-ordinated programme of environmental control becomes necessary to maintain high standards of public health. Since 1968 the Government has given priority to achieve the objective of a clean Singapore by way of a concerted national effort.

Administrative Set-Up

Recognizing the need to have a highly organized and well-planned infrastructure for more effective action to tackle the problem of pollution before it reaches the stage in other large cities, a new Ministry of the Environment was created in September 1972. Various departments under the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Development, whose functions have a direct bearing on pollution control or environmental health were absorbed by the new Ministry. This new Ministry has two major divisions - the Environmental Health and Environmental Engineering Divisions.

The Environmental Health Division is mainly responsible for: (a) general hygiene and sanitation services which include licensing and control of eating establishments and offensive trades, investigations into complaints on public health nuisances and taking enforcement action under the Environmental Health laws; (b) vector and pest control; (c) public cleansing; (d) control of food and drugs; (e) control of cemeteries and crematoria; and (f) control of hawkers and markets.

The Environmental Engineering Division is responsible for the implementation of development projects especially sewerage and drainage, and also provides the engineering services within the Ministry.

The Anti-Pollution Unit, which was established in 1970 to take charge of air pollution control, remains under the Prime Minister's Office.

## Updating and Enactment of Public Health Laws

The administration of Public Health practices has to be grounded on a strong legal base. Existing laws were updated and amended and more effective new laws enacted to provide for more efficient environmental health control.

The Environmental Public Health Act, 1968 was brought into operation on 2 January 1969. The Act covers a comprehensive field of environmental health section. The section on Public Cleansing deals with all aspects of public cleansing in an urban setting - cleansing of public streets, private streets, removal of trade refuse and the collection and removal of refuse and nightsoil. Provisions against littering and depositing refuses in public places are also included.

Various subsidiary legislations were also enacted for more effective environmental control. These include EPH (Hawkers) Regulations 1969, EPH (Markets) Regulations 1969, the EPH (Prohibition of Discharge of Trade Effluent into Water Courses) Regulations, 1970, EPH (Public Cleansing) Regulations, 1970 and EPH (Swimming Pools) Regulations, 1972.

Specific laws to control air pollution were found necessary. "The Clean Air Act 1971" aims at controlling air pollution in industrial and trade premises. The Clean Air (Standard) Regulations, 1972 sets out permissible limits in the discharge of air pollutants. Open burning of trade waste becomes illegal with the enactment of "The Clean Air (Prohibition on the use of open fire) Order 1973". Smoking in cinemas, theatres and specific building is also prohibited by "Prohibition on Smoking in Certain Places Act 1970".

"The Prevention of Pollution of the Sea Act, 1971" under the jurisdiction of the Director of Marine and the Port of Singapore Authority enables effect to be given to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil, 1954, and to make provisions for preventing the pollution of Singapore waters by oil and other substances.

The scope of the Sale of Food and Drugs Act and Food and Drugs Regulations, 1957, was found to be inadequate for the control of the sale of food and drugs in Singapore. A new Sale of Food Act, 1973, was passed to secure wholesomeness and purity of food; it fixes standards for a larger variety of food; prevents the sale or other disposition or use of appliances dangerous or injurious to health; and prevents the fraudulent or deceptive sale of foods.

## National Health Campaigns

Massive government effort for a cleaner and healthier environment would be futile without widespread public understanding, support, and co-operation. Following the success of the first-month-long National Health Campaign on 'Keep Singapore Clean' in 1968, several other campaigns were similarly launched annually to publicise the new laws and, more important, to stimulate active public participation in the improvement of the environment. The 'Keep Singapore Clean and Mosquito-Free' (1969), 'Keep Singapore Clean and Pollution-Free' (1970), 'Keep Singapore Pollution-Free' (1971) and 'Keep Our Water Clean' (1973) Campaigns emphasized the various aspects of environmental health. The 'keep clean' and 'pollution-free' themes were reinforced in subsequent follow-up campaigns.

In these campaigns, the widest possible participation was aimed at through the involvement of government departments, private organizations, educational institutions and community centres. There was wide publicity and extensive use of mass media.

### The Results

#### (a) The Control of Litter Problems

There are now cleaner roads and highways, drains and water courses, parks and other scenic spots. Singapore is now known as a 'clean and green' city.

#### (b) The Control of Air Pollution

Continuous monitoring of ambient air concentrations of various pollutants (sulphur dioxide, smoke, total dust fallout, carbon monoxide, oxides of nitrogen) at several locations in the island indicate that generally, the air pollution levels in Singapore are satisfactory compared to levels recorded in other industrialized cities.

#### (c) The Control of Water Pollution

Waste matter thrown indiscriminately into open drains, trade effluent discharge and sullage water from domestic sources are the main causes of water pollution in Singapore. Enforcement measures complemented by educational programmes have transformed the appearance of some of the most polluted rivers in Singapore. Extensive sewerage schemes to sewer the whole Republic in phases were carried out. At present, about 60 per cent of the total population is being served by the sewerage system. Closed drainage system to abate water pollution was planned for new satellite towns.

#### (d) The Control of Vectors

While malarial vectors have become less important with extensive urbanization, the problems of Aedes control has assumed greater importance. The system of Aedes control is an integrated method which makes use of vector ecology, the law (Destruction of Disease-Bearing Insects Act, 1968) and public health education. Before 1968, the premise index for the Aedes species was 18-20 per cent. With the implementation of integrated control in 1971, the index has been reduced to a level of 2-6 per cent.

### Conclusion

The efforts of improving all aspects of environmental hygiene and of making Singapore the cleanest and healthiest city in this part of the world will be continued. The control of water pollution is being given top priority and a Water Pollution and Drainage Bill will be presented to Parliament in 1974. This will give more teeth to water control measures. Various development projects are planned. These include sewerage projects to sewer the whole island, mechanization of road sweeping and construction of a large refuse incineration plant at Ulu Pandan. The problem of noise pollution control is also being looked into.

24. The Prevention, Treatment and Control of Epidemic and Endemic Diseases

Introduction

The main communicable diseases reported from 1969 - 1973 were tuberculosis, enteric fever, malaria and dengue haemorrhagic fever.

Cholera was the only disease of international importance that was notified. It occurred only sporadically in the country.

The notification of cases from medical practitioners formed the basis of control measures directed towards the control of communicable diseases. The Quarantine and Prevention of Diseases Act, 1970, Chapter 166, required all adults and not only medical practitioners, to notify all cases and suspected cases of communicable diseases listed in its schedule. This included not only the four diseases subject to the International Health Regulations but also 13 other communicable diseases. The Act also provides for the addition of further communicable diseases to this list as and when it is required.

Importation of Diseases

The Republic was, for the most part, free from diseases of international importance during the last five years. A delicate balance had to be struck between ensuring that the country received maximum protection against the importation of these diseases while, at the same time, causing minimal interference to international traffic. This was achieved by judiciously applying the recommendations contained in the International Health Regulations.

In July 1971, health clearance of ships by radio was introduced. Ships from infected ports were given free pratique when assurance was given that all certificates were in order and that there were no cases or deaths from communicable diseases on board. Inspection of the relevant certificates was required within two hours of the ship anchoring at its berth.

From July 1972, a common health clearance system with Malaysia facilitated the movements of international travellers in this region.

Health clearance of disembarking and transit passengers from other countries was carried out for both countries by the Airport Health Officers at the first airport of call.

Immunization Programmes

The control of the main infectious diseases was based on the national immunization programme. This began at infancy and extended to cover the school population.

Smallpox vaccination was compulsory. This was provided free to the populace. From 1969 - 1972, an average of 44,000 infants were vaccinated annually, representing a coverage of 94.3 per cent of the live births in the country.

School entrants were given boosters in their first two years in school. During the same period an average of 55,000 school children were vaccinated annually representing 92.9 per cent of the new entrants in schools.

Diphtheria vaccination was also compulsory under the Quarantine and Prevention of Disease Act. All infants had to be vaccinated by six months and had to complete their primary course within two years. School entrants were also given booster doses within their first two years in school.

From 1969 - 1972, an average of 34,000 infants and 44,000 school children were vaccinated annually. These represented 71.6 per cent and 80.5 per cent of the respective populations.

In conjunction with diphtheria vaccinations, immunization against tetanus and, where applicable, pertussis was carried out.

Immunization against poliomyelitis was achieved through the use of oral sabin vaccine. This was offered, on a voluntary basis, to all infants receiving their diphtheria immunization. The coverage for poliomyelitis was slightly lower than that for smallpox and diphtheria, being 80.7 per cent for infants and 33.0 per cent for new school entrants.

The effectiveness of these immunization programmes was reflected not only in the reduction of the incidence of all three communicable diseases but also the maintenance of the incidence rates at a very low level.

#### Food Borne diseases

Enteric fever was the major problem with an endemic rate of 8.9 cases per 100,000 population being reported during this period. No significant change in the trend of the diseases was noted, despite improvements in the environment. Prospective surveys to identify unknown sources of infection were instituted in an attempt to reduce the incidence of the disease.

Cholera was reported sporadically in Singapore. Any analysis of an outbreak in 1972 showed higher attack rates with advancing age. This also indicated that cholera was not endemic in the country since this was the pattern of disease frequently noted in areas having first experience of cholera.

#### Vector Borne Diseases

Malaria and dengue haemorrhagic fever were the vector borne diseases of public health importance. The control of both diseases was based upon vector control, prompt notification and treatment of patients.

Malaria was endemic in the Republic. A morbidity rate of 16.9 per 100,000 population was reported during this period. Most of these were infected in other countries and subsequently served as sources of infection within the country.

Dengue haemorrhagic fever was a major problem in 1973 when it caused 1,123 cases and 27 deaths. A review and extension of control measures is being undertaken as this disease is expected to assume even larger importance in the future.

### Treatment of Communicable Diseases

The treatment, including hospitalization and dispensation of drugs, and ancillary investigations were provided free for the populace at government hospitals.

25. The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

The medical services of the Ministry of Health ensure that all medical attention is easily available in the event of sickness. To this end the Ministry of Health's services provide not only for primary medical care but also specialist services.

Primary medical care is available through 26 outpatient clinics spread throughout the island and a very nominal fee is charged for such services. Additionally 46 Maternal and Child Health Clinics provide for the health of mothers and infants. Ante-natal and post-natal care, family planning advice as well as cancer-screening services are available in such clinics. No charge is levied for attendance at Maternal and Child Health clinics. Immunization services are also provided in the child health services. The School Health Services provide for assistance of care for children in schools. This includes medical check-ups as well as dental treatment. Additional to these there is a general practitioner service.

There are 17 government and 7 private hospitals with a total bed complement of approximately 9,000. The government hospitals provide for specialist services in internal medicine, general surgery, specialist surgery, ophthalmology, paediatric medicine, otorhino-laryngology, dermatology, obstetrics and gynaecology, haematology, pathology and radiology-diagnostic and therapeutic. Tuberculosis, infectious diseases, chronic illness as well as mental illnesses are catered for in special hospitals. Institutional hospitals also exist for Prisons to look after the health of inmates.

E. The right of the family, motherhood and childhood to protection and assistance

#### Protection of the Family

26. The family was the basic unit in society and its importance to the individual and the nation could not be over-emphasized. The law governing the institution of marriage was codified in the Women's Charter. Unless sanctioned by an order of the Supreme Court on specified grounds no marriage validly entered could be terminated. There were also provisions in the law to enable the parties to seek a reconciliation for the purpose of saving the marriage.

#### Special Care and Assistance to Mothers

27. With regard to the question of assistance to mothers the government was aware that the availability of adequate day-care facilities for young children was an important consideration amongst married women in deciding whether to take up employment. The Social Welfare Department encouraged more married women to take up employment by the provision of creches of a high standard over various strategic points in the Island. During the years under review, several measures were taken to expand, augment and intensify creche facilities in the Republic:

- (a) the upper age limit of children attending creches was extended to 6 years plus in 1970. This would enable them to continue their attendance at the creche until they were eligible to attend school;
- (b) more creches had been established over various strategic points of the Island, especially in the densely populated housing estates. In 1971, the Jurong Town Creche in Jurong New Town was opened and this was followed in 1973 with the opening of Toa Payoh Creche in Toa Payoh New Town, bringing the total number of creches in the Republic at the end of the review period to 12. The Department was planning the opening of more creches in the next five years. In addition the Department encouraged and helped the private sector, especially industrial organizations, to set up creches within their own premises to reduce high turnover in the female labour force and to induce more married women to take up employment;
- (c) the Creche Establishments Act which was passed in 1973 provided for the licensing and control of private creches to ensure that the education, health, safety and welfare of the young children who were sent to such creches, were adequately taken care of. This Act was yet to be brought into force pending the finalization of the detailed regulations to complement the provisions of the Act.

Right of children and young persons  
to special care and assistance

28. Amendments were made to the Adoption of Children Act in 1971, allowing for the issue of an ordinary birth certificate to an adopted child in order to give the status of a natural child to the adopted child, and thereby facilitating the child's complete integration into the adoptive family. Moreover, the law was also made less restrictive to enable the applicant for an adoption order to adopt a child notwithstanding that the applicant was under twenty-five years of age or less than twenty-one years older than the infant provided the applicant and the infant were within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity with each other or in other exceptional circumstances.

29. Further improvements had been made to the Fostering Scheme which was started as a pilot project in 1956 to provide foster care for abandoned and neglected children below 2 years of age. The Scheme was extended to cater for children up to 10 years old in 1962 and to include mentally defective children in the following year. In 1971, there was a further relaxation of the age limit to 16 years for the fostering of older children. This expansion of foster care and adoption services which provided alternatives to institutionalization, have resulted in a greater number of children being brought up within the family environment.

30. A further step was made in this direction with the introduction of the Homemaker's Service in 1971. This Scheme provided for the care of children under 14 years of age in their own homes during the temporary or prolonged incapacity of the mother during illness, childbirth or other emergencies.



31. At the same time, however, the Department reorganized its residential institutions in order to streamline the services provided. In May 1972, the new Junior Approved School and Remand Home known as the Junior Boys' Home, was established to provide for the rehabilitation and training of young male offenders and in 1973, an Approved School and Home was established to accommodate delinquent and problem girls who required special training programmes. In addition, the Department was planning the establishment of a children's home for pre-school orphan boys below 6 years and orphan girls up to 16 years of age.

32. An aspect of special care and assistance to young persons, which should be mentioned was the treatment of young offenders. The general view taken in the treatment of offenders especially with juvenile and young offenders was that as far as possible no offender should be committed to institutional treatment before he was given an opportunity of receiving some form of non-institutional treatment within the community. The most effective treatment for most first offenders was probation. Probation had many advantages. It did not precipitate a catastrophic break-up of the offender's social and economic obligations to his family and community. It preserved him from the harmful influences inherent in institutional confinement. It was more humane than any other measures of treatment and did not deprive him of his economic social and cultural rights.

33. In the treatment of young persons and children who had offended, considerable attention was paid to the effects of labelling. A distinction was made between those who were mildly out-of-control, whose behaviour might be the result of emotional difficulties or a reaction to authority or simply boredom, and those whose behaviour was symptomatic of deep-rooted maladjustment and personality disorder. Therefore, a certain degree of prudence was exercised in deciding cases that should be dealt with informally by social service agencies and those which should be referred to the Juvenile Court for judicial cognizance.

34. The Juvenile Court was the focal point of treatment of juvenile offenders. It was designed to reduce the stigma associated with criminal trials. It was based on the concept of helping the child and his parents rather than punishing them. It took into account the fact that maladapted behaviour and misdeeds of a juvenile were often the result of a failure in the functioning of a family or a lack of adjustment to the social environment. The treatment facilities available to the Juvenile Court were individual and family social casework, probation and aftercare, foster home placement, psychological and psychiatric services, half-way hostels and treatment within the confines of institutions.

35. To further improve and expand the correctional services for both adult and juvenile offenders, the government appointed two committees in early 1973. One committee was to look into the existing penal system with a view to enhancing its rehabilitative functions and activities. The other was to study the major local causative factors of youthful crime and delinquency and to find new ways and means to control and prevent crime and delinquency and for the treatment of young adult and juvenile offenders. The Reports of these two Committees were being awaited.

The Number and Spacing of Children

36. Parents had always the right to choose the number and spacing of their children. However, the government had in 1973 taken a number of measures to dissuade parents from having too many children on the ground that uncontrolled population growth would retard the general economic development of the country. The view of the government was that the ideal family should have only two children. No income tax deduction would be allowed in respect of a fourth child who was born after 1 August 1973. Woman officers in the public service would no longer be accorded full-pay maternity leave for the birth of her third child.

F. The Right to Education

Right to free primary education

37. The government's aim was to provide at least ten years of education for every child. Primary education of six years' duration leading to the Primary School Leaving Examination was free for all pupils between the ages of six and twelve who were children of Singapore citizens. Nominal school fees were charged for secondary education and there was also generous government assistance for needy pupils in the form of bursaries, scholarships, remission of school fees, half-payment of fees and study loans.

Right to equal access to higher education  
on the basis of merit, including technical  
vocational and professional education

38. After six years of primary education in the language media of their parents' choice, pupils sat for the Primary School Leaving Examination which was conducted in each of the four official languages. On passing the Primary School Leaving Examination, they were eligible for promotion to Secondary I in government and government-aided schools while Primary School leavers could join Vocational Institutes. In 1969, a common curriculum for the first two years of the secondary school course was introduced, incorporating academic and technical subjects. On completion of Secondary II, pupils could either proceed to Secondary III and later Secondary IV in the arts, science, technical or commercial stream or join industrial training institutes for various trade and artisan courses. On completion of their fourth year of secondary education, pupils in all language streams sat for a common school-leaving examination renamed the Singapore-Cambridge GCE "O" Level Examinations in 1971.

39. Post-secondary education was provided in technical colleges, the Institute of Education (established in 1973 to replace the former Teachers' Training College) and in those schools and junior colleges which offered two years of post-secondary education leading to the Singapore-Cambridge GCE "A" Level Examination.

40. Admission to institutions of higher learning was based on merit - the attainment of a certain number of minimum passes at the advanced and the ordinary levels in the GCE "A" Level Examination and the school record of a pupil's scholastic and extra-curricular achievements. For enrolment to higher degrees, a student's first degree as well as evidence of his ability to do research would be required.

Right of parents to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children

41. The government provided education in the four official languages i.e. Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English, to all, regardless of race, language, religion, sex and socio-economic status. Primary and secondary education was available in each of the four official languages and every school-going child was assured of a place in school. Parents were free to choose the language and a second language to be used as the media of instruction for their children's education. Whatever the language chosen, the government's policy of parity of treatment for the four language streams ensured that the standards concerning curricula and staff were comparable, that physical facilities and financial provisions were identical and that academic and professional qualifications obtained on completion of courses in the various language streams were equally acceptable for higher education and for employment.

G. The right to participate freely in cultural life

42. The right to take part in cultural life is recognized. Subject to the provisions of the Public Entertainments Act, the Cinematograph Films Act, the Undesirable Publications Act and the Printing Presses Act, people in general were free to participate and enjoy in any form of cultural activities.

43. Legislation enacted in respect of the right to the protection of the moral and material interests arising out of scientific, literary or artistic work are:

- (a) Public Entertainments Act
- (b) Cinematograph Films Act
- (c) Undesirable Publications Act
- (d) Printing Presses Act

Except for the setting up of a centralized unit called the Public Entertainments Licensing Unit in 1971 to administer the Public Entertainments Act, there was neither any change in these legislations nor the administrative arrangements made to administer these legislations.

III. Action with a view to ensure that the rights referred to under II above are enjoyed by increasing numbers of the population and without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status

44. Discrimination of any kind based upon race, colour, sex, language, religion, etc., was strictly forbidden by the Constitution. Further in 1973 a Constitutional Amendment was passed establishing a Presidential Council for Minority Rights. The general function of the Council was to consider and report on such matters affecting persons of any racial or religious community in Singapore as were referred to the

Council by Parliament or the government. Its specific function was to draw attention to any Bill or to any subsidiary legislation which in its opinion was a measure which was, or was likely in its practical application to be, disadvantageous to persons of any racial or religious community and not equally disadvantageous to persons of other such communities, either directly by prejudicing persons of that community or indirectly by giving advantage to persons of another community.

45. With the exceptions of the 12 Children's Creches, 6 Children's Centres and the 13 Welfare Institutions which were located at various strategic parts of the Republic, and the disbursement of Financial Assistance, which were also distributed at branch offices and post offices, the services offered by the Department were relatively centralized. In order to make its services readily available to increasing numbers of the population, the Department was planning the establishment of area welfare centres.

IV. Difficulties experienced in ensuring the enjoyment of the rights referred to under II above, and methods and measures applied

46. The main difficulty was in the lack of trained staff to render effective social services to the public and this had been one of the handicaps towards the effective implementation of old as well as new schemes. To overcome this, the Social Welfare Department had in September 1971 established a Training and Research Section with the main responsibility of conducting in-service training for its staff as well as for those concerned in welfare work in Singapore.