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President: Mr. Corneliu MANESCU (Romania).

AGENDA ITEM 53

Draft Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

REPORT OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE (concluded)
(A/6880)

1. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The Assembly will continue its consideration of item 53.
2. I will now give the floor to those representatives who wish to explain their vote before the vote.
3. Mr. VAKIL (Iran) (translated from French): Last year everyone agreed that the Covenants on Human Rights were among the most important achievements of the twenty-first session of the General Assembly [see General Assembly resolution 2200 (XXI)]. I am convinced that the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women will remain in the annals of our Organization as one of the most significant decisions of the twenty-second session.
4. Granted, in many countries measures had already been taken or were being taken to achieve equality between men and women. Granted, the participation of women in social, economic and political life was already a reality in many societies, particularly after the Second World War. Granted, during the last few decades, new laws aimed at the progressive elimination of discrimination against women have been adopted in nearly all countries. But that does not in any way detract from the importance of this Declaration. Indeed, the text before us [A/6880, para. 112] marks a solemn end to a prejudice which has already survived far too long, namely, the so-called inferiority of women. The Declaration constitutes a final break with the past and restores to women the dignity to which they have as much right as men. The Declaration is also significant because it puts an end to a notorious injustice by recognizing the important contribution which women can make to the social, political, economic and cultural life of their countries. Lastly, it is a fitting complement to the series of texts already adopted by the United Nations with a view to promoting the rights embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

5. It might, of course, be regretted that the United Nations did not draft this Declaration sooner; but, admittedly, it comes at an appropriate time, since the General Assembly is now about to adopt it on the very eve of the International Year for Human Rights. In my opinion, this coincidence is fortunate, as it will undoubtedly give the text even more impact.

6. In this connexion, we should congratulate the Commission on the Status of Women, which has done a praiseworthy job in a relatively short time. The subject was first discussed during the Commission's eighteenth session at Teheran in 1965. At that time, women in my country had just acceded to political rights. Since then, their participation in every field has consistently increased, and the laws recently adopted by our Parliament on family welfare and social services have made for greater equality between men and women. We are particularly proud that we have already almost fully implemented the objectives proclaimed in the Declaration.

7. We hope that these principles will be put into effect everywhere as soon as possible, for, in our age of scientific progress, we cannot tolerate a form of discrimination which relegates one half of the world's population to an inferior position. We are well aware of the harmful effects of the alienation which results from these outworn ideas.

8. May I recall the views of contemporary sociologists and economists on the subject: discrimination against women diminishes the working potential of the nation; it paralyzes all forms of collective or individual development; it slows down progress; and does considerable and irreparable harm to children and hence to future generations.

9. Of course, it is inconceivable that the Declaration, by mere virtue of its existence, will transform overnight the customs of the world; that would be to give words a magical illusory power. No, the Declaration, as stated in the Third Committee's report, merely describes the objectives to be attained; we will have to work to achieve them, and for that purpose, we must first overcome deep-rooted prejudices; to some extent, it is a battle which men will have to fight.

10. Indeed, until now, man has been content to fight Nature; now he will also have to fight his own inner nature, in order to put an end to the myth of women's inferiority.

11. I cannot conclude without quoting a writer of a State which has done much to achieve equality between men and women; I am referring to the Russian author, Gogol, who said:

"The influence of women can be great. This is true particularly today in the order or the disorder

of our society where we perceive a spiritual numbness, a sort of fatigue of moral forces which require an awakening. To bring about this awakening, the co-operation of women is indispensable."

Those words were written in 1846 and they are still relevant and true in 1967.

12. Since I have just quoted Gogol, may I mention an important anniversary. It is with great pleasure that I express, on behalf of my delegation, my congratulations to the Government and people of the Soviet Union on the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution. What strikes us today is the tremendous technological upsurge of that great country, and the many great successes it has achieved in a very short period of time, despite the devastation of the Second World War.

13. The world owes much to the Russians, and we cannot forget that it is they who opened the door to the space age. I should like to recall that my country was the first to recognize the new-born Soviet State, and in recent years the good-neighbourly and co-operative relations between our two countries have been strengthened. Our desire to establish good-neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union is merely another example of our declared policy of peace, coexistence and better understanding between all nations, whatever their ideology. May I once again extend my delegation's congratulations and best wishes to the Government and people of the Soviet Union and hope that this coincidence augurs well for international co-operation. One example of this co-operation can be found in the Declaration which we will certainly adopt unanimously.

14. Mr. GHAUS (Afghanistan): The delegation of Afghanistan is happy that the Third Committee has adopted the draft Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [A/6880 and Corr.1, para. 112]. My delegation expressed its views on the different articles of the Declaration in that Committee [1471st meeting]. In spite of some minor reservations due to some shortcomings my delegation will vote in favour of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The delegation of Afghanistan believes that by adopting this Declaration a significant step will be taken by the international community towards the emancipation of women and the safe-guarding of their rights.

15. May I avail myself of this opportunity to convey our deep thoughts and heartfelt congratulations to the great peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution. The people of Afghanistan and the peoples of the Soviet Union share a common border of almost 2,000 kilometres and thus are our immediate and close neighbours. For us, therefore, the association of Afghanistan on this occasion with the voices of congratulations has a particular significance. Since the great October Revolution our relations with the Soviet Union have been friendly and neighbourly. These bonds of friendship have not only been maintained but have been strengthened through the years as a result of increased understanding and greater co-operation. If a prominent example of coexistence—or in the words of the United Nations Charter of how

nations should "live together in peace with one another as good neighbours"—is sought no better example can be found than the pattern of relations which has come into being between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. The differences in ideology, system of government and way of life which exist between the two countries have never stood in the way of the establishment and the promotion of the most cordial and friendly relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. A reference from this rostrum to this particular aspect of the relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union is of special significance inasmuch as in this hall the nations of the world, regardless of their social and political systems or ways of life, have come together to share in harmony the principles of a common Charter which has made the existence of the United Nations Organization one of the greatest achievements of mankind.

16. In congratulating the peoples of the Soviet Union obviously one cannot fail to comment on the achievements they have registered in all fields since the great October Revolution. My delegation, however, would like to confine itself to an expression of its great appreciation for the contributions which have been made by the peoples of the Soviet and the other socialist countries in the struggle for the abolition of colonialism and support for the rights of peoples and nations to self-determination and towards the annihilation of racial discrimination and towards international co-operation with the developing countries. Most of these accomplishments have taken place here in the United Nations. Therefore, again it is appropriate that our appreciation should be expressed within the walls of the Organization. We are confident that all who are assembled here share these thoughts.

17. I should like to add that we are very happy to convey our congratulations to the Soviet mission to the United Nations, the Soviet Government and the peoples of the Soviet Union through you, Mr. President, who are the first President of the General Assembly to come from a socialist country. Your election to this high office, Sir, was a source of great satisfaction to my delegation. Since this is the first time we speak from this rostrum, the delegation of Afghanistan at this somewhat late stage presents to you its warmest felicitations.

18. Mr. KALPAGE (Ceylon): We shall support without any hesitation this draft Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [A/6880 and Corr.1, para. 112]. In all fields of activity, women in Ceylon have been granted their rightful place. Ceylon was the first country in Asia to introduce universal adult franchise. Moreover, it will be remembered that Ceylon was the first country in the world to select a woman as Prime Minister.

19. The Chairman of the Ceylon delegation, in his address to the General Assembly [1588th meeting], has already saluted the Soviet Union on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary. Nevertheless, on this historic day the Ceylon delegation would like to associate itself with other delegations in extending once again its warm felicitations to the Soviet Union. The Bolshevik Revolution is indeed a landmark in the history of the human race. Its influence has been

felt not only in the Soviet Union, but throughout the entire world. We applaud the achievements of the Soviet people, and we express the hope that, in active and harmonious collaboration with the rest of the world, they will move forward to still greater efforts and attainments in the future. We in Ceylon are indeed grateful to the Soviet Union which, along with other industrial Powers, has made a substantial contribution to our industrial development.

20. Coming from the oldest parliamentary democracy in Asia, we should also like to extend our friendly greetings to the Parliament of Canada on its centenary celebrations. We appreciate Canada's vital contribution to Ceylon's recent progress.

21. Miss MUTER (Indonesia): The Indonesian delegation wishes to state its position on the draft Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [A/16880 and Corr.1, para. 112]. As we made clear in our intervention in the Third Committee, my delegation supported the original draft as it was adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women, and voted for the amendments which in my delegation's view contributed to the improvement of the original draft. My delegation voted in favour of the draft Declaration as a whole in the Third Committee, and it will do so in this Assembly.

22. My delegation will vote for the deletion of the sentence in sub-paragraph 2 (b) of article 6 which has been proposed by the delegation of Ghana, since this would improve the text.

23. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to extend its most heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution to the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and also to the delegations of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics. Furthermore, my delegation pays a sincere tribute to the great achievements made by the Soviet Union in the advancement of science and technology and to its other achievements in the field of human progress.

24. Finally, my delegation associates itself with previous speakers in extending its warmest congratulations and greetings to Canada on the occasion of the centennial of the Canadian Parliament.

25. Mr. Orhan ERALP (Turkey): My delegation attaches great importance to the draft Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [A/6880 and Corr.1, para. 112] which, in our view, constitutes an historic step towards the promotion of human rights. Without prejudice to a minor reservation which we made in the Third Committee [1470th meeting], regarding sub-paragraph 1 (a) of article 10, we have warmly supported all along the declaration and we shall be happy to see it unanimously adopted this afternoon.

26. It is indeed abundantly clear that without the full participation of women in the social, cultural, political and economic fields, no country today can realize its full development. Having already realized major steps in the full emancipation of women in our own country, it is a particular source of satisfaction to us to witness the embodiment of principles already espoused by us in a solemn international document.

27. Mr. President, with your permission I should like on this occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution to express the best wishes of my delegation for the happiness and prosperity of the peoples of the Soviet Union, the great and powerful northern neighbour of my country.

28. Revolutions have become recurrent landmarks in the history of most nations, and so long as they reflect and are based upon the free and spontaneous will of the people concerned they have often become the means of progress. Many of us here in this Assembly owe our freedom, independence and democratic way of life to revolutions. A few revolutions, like the American and the French, in the last two centuries have had lasting effects on the political and social thinking of man and have given the shining example of the creation of democratic institutions to the world. There is no doubt that the October Revolution in Russia will also be recorded as one of the great landmarks in the political and social history of mankind.

29. The people of my own country owe their independence and their democratic way of life to a revolution under the founder of the Republic, Kemal Ataturk. In those days in the early 1920s, we, the people of Turkey, enjoyed the neighbourly aid of the Soviet Union under Lenin in our struggle against imperialism and for our national sovereignty. Today, with full mutual respect for each other's foreign commitments and internal preoccupations, we maintain excellent relations with our neighbour to the north, who has once again created the circumstances wherein two neighbours with different systems of government can live in friendship and economic co-operation in a manner which could serve as an example to many.

30. Only a few weeks ago the Prime Minister of my country, on an official visit to the Soviet Union, had the opportunity to observe at first hand the many successes of that country in its gigantic struggle to bring a higher standard of living to its people and in its attempt to harness modern technology to the needs of men. Other evidence of such great scientific and technological progress are constantly in view in the skies around us. It is the fervent hope of my country that the neighbouring peoples of the Soviet Union may for ever live in peace and grow in prosperity, secure in their own frontiers and for ever guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter which twenty-one years ago they helped to formulate.

31. Mr. WALDHEIM (Austria): The Austrian delegation will vote in favour of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [A/6880 and Corr.1, para. 112]. That Declaration, which is the result of long, arduous work on the part of the Commission on the Status of Women, and of the Third Committee of this Assembly, starts out by stating that all discrimination against women is fundamentally unjust and constitutes an offence against human dignity; it goes on to express the wish that Member States take all appropriate measures to do away with all laws, regulations and customs which are discriminatory against women. The Declaration contains separate articles which define the position of women in public life, in the field of civil law, as well as in economic and social life; it especially stresses the necessity

of giving women equal educational possibilities with men.

32. As my delegation has pointed out in the course of the general debate on this item in the Third Committee [1468th meeting], the Austrian Government had some doubts whether Austrian law and regulations really applied all safeguards for guaranteeing the principles laid down in the Declaration. In order to overcome those difficulties the Austrian legislative bodies, during the last year, have initiated certain changes in the legal provisions covering the legal status of women in Austria. With that situation in mind, I am proud to say that the status of women in Austria is such that no further measures need be taken to implement the present declaration.

33. I should also like to mention that Austria was a member of the Commission on the Status of Women when that body adopted the final draft which was the basis of the discussions in the Third Committee. Although certain amendments have been adopted to change that draft, the Declaration we are going to adopt retains the basic ideas and thoughts expressed by the Commission.

34. We consider the Declaration a fundamental step in the advancement of the rights and interests of women; it expresses the universal opinion of Member States that the legal status of women must be well defined and protected so as to secure for them their rightful place in human society. Therefore, my delegation whole-heartedly supports the principles contained in that Declaration.

35. On behalf of the Austrian delegation, I should like to join previous speakers in expressing our sincere congratulations to the delegation of the Soviet Union on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Socialist October Revolution. That revolution was indeed one of the truly significant events in recent history, not only a turning-point in the history of the Russian people but also of far-reaching impact for the social and political development in other parts of the world.

36. During the past fifty years, a period of upheaval and change for almost all countries represented in this Organization, the Soviet Union has risen to become one of the major political, economic and industrial Powers in the world, whose outstanding success in such fields as technology, science—particularly relating to outer space—literature and music have won the admiration of all peoples.

37. Austria, because of its geographic location, and as a nation whose history for centuries has been closely interwoven with the history of the peoples of Eastern Europe, has had a long tradition of close relationship with the Russian people. In our most recent history the people of the Soviet Union contributed significantly to the restoration of Austria's independence in 1945. As one of the signatories of the Austrian State Treaty of 1955, the Soviet Union, together with the United States, Great Britain and France, re-established Austria's full national sovereignty and thus opened the way for Austria's entry into the United Nations in the same year.

38. Since then, Austria has been able to maintain friendly relations with the Soviet Union, based on

mutual trust and respect, and to establish close relations in various economic, cultural, technical and scientific fields, in spite of the different social systems prevailing in the two countries.

39. On this day, when the Soviet Union celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its revolution, we should like to extend to it our sincere congratulations and our warmest wishes for the future.

40. My delegation also wishes to extend its warmest congratulations to the delegation of Canada on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Federation. This event was duly commemorated by the holding of one of the greatest and most beautiful exhibitions ever seen. Austria has always maintained the closest and most cordial relations with Canada, which in recent history has contributed so much to international co-operation and understanding. Our sincere wishes go to the people and Government of Canada for a successful and prosperous future.

41. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The Assembly will now vote on the draft Declaration, which will be found in the Third Committee's report [A/6880, para. 112].

42. The delegation of Ghana has requested a separate vote on the second sentence of paragraph 2 (b) of article 6, which reads as follows:

"In all cases the interest of the children shall be paramount".

43. The delegation of Syria has requested a separate vote on the first sentence of the same sub-paragraph, which reads as follows:

"Women shall have equal rights with men during marriage and at its dissolution".

44. If there is no objection, I shall put these two sentences to the vote in the order in which the requests for a separate vote were made.

45. I invite the Assembly to vote on the retention of the second sentence of paragraph 2 (b) of article 6.

The sentence was retained by 55 votes to 42, with 11 abstentions.

46. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I invite the Assembly to vote now on the retention of the first sentence of paragraph 2 (b) of article 6.

The sentence was retained by 99 votes to none, with 10 abstentions.

47. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): If there is no other request for a separate vote, I shall put the draft Declaration as a whole to the vote.

The draft Declaration as a whole was adopted by 111 votes to none [resolution 2263 (XXII)].

48. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I shall now call on those speakers who wish to explain their vote.

49. Mr. EL KONY (United Arab Republic): As we are approaching the year 1968, the International Year for Human Rights, my delegation is gratified to note that the General Assembly unanimously adopted today the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination

against Women. We consider this Declaration a very important and constructive effort which recognizes for women all their political, civil, economic, cultural and social rights on an equal footing with men, in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. We are sure that this document will take its important place next to other documents adopted by this Organization in the field of human rights.

50. The United Arab Republic took part in the discussions, throughout the formulation of this Declaration, in the Third Committee and in the Commission on the Status of Women, to the efforts of which we must pay tribute today. My delegation was gratified today to join all those who voted for the Declaration and would like to express our endorsement of all the principles included in the Declaration.

51. Having thus commented on a great step forward in the field of human rights, it is indeed fitting today, on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution of the Soviet Union, to convey to the peoples of the Soviet Union our hearty congratulations and best wishes, and to pay tribute to them, as well as to their Government and leaders, for their outstanding achievements.

52. The cause of freedom, peace and progress in the world was greatly enhanced by the strong support and great help which the Soviet Union has rendered and is still rendering to the peoples' movement for freedom and development. The mere existence of the Soviet Union is in itself a principal element in consolidating peace and encouraging progress among all mankind. The people of the United Arab Republic are particularly grateful to the Soviet Union, its peoples and Government, for their strong support towards safeguarding our freedom and for their highly appreciated aid in the process of our development.

53. It gives me great pleasure to participate in commemorating this great and happy occasion and to wish the Soviet peoples continued progress and prosperity.

54. Mrs. OULD DADDAH (Mauritania) (translated from French): On behalf of the delegations of the Central African Republic, Dahomey, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Togo and Upper Volta, and as spokesman for the countries bordering the Senegal river—Guinea, Mali, Senegal, and my own country, Mauritania—I should like to express the satisfaction that we feel at the adoption today by the twenty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

55. To convey fully and accurately the position of women in our countries, and no doubt that of most women in the Third World, we must admit, simply and sincerely that as far as we are concerned the Declaration does not seem to meet the most urgent need, nor does it respond to all our legitimate aspirations and fundamental rights. We still hope, however, that the United Nations and its specialized agencies will devote further consideration to the specific problems of women in the Third World, which are part of the larger problem of economic and social

development, so that a positive contribution can be made to their solution.

56. Nevertheless, the Declaration which we have just adopted is a document of historic importance and an outstanding contribution to the advancement of women throughout the world. Among other things, the Declaration is an effective instrument in the struggle against all the prejudices which in varying degrees and forms persist throughout the world, constituting a serious obstacle to the valuable role which women can and should play, not only in the service of their families, but of their countries, the international community and the cause of peace.

57. This important United Nations document will naturally take its place alongside all those others, no less important, which in this unstable world, at this time when peace is still so vulnerable and precarious, help us to retain our faith in the United Nations and our hope for a better world, with greater justice and brotherhood.

58. We are well aware how much effort, patience and understanding this Declaration represents. We pay a sincere tribute to all the delegations which have taken part in the drafting and improvement of this document from its inception to the present day. We are particularly grateful to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Status of Women Section and their leaders, i.e., Mrs. Sipilä, Chairman of the Commission on the Status of Women and representative of Finland, and Mrs. Bruce, Chief of the Status of Women Section. In these very special circumstances, may we address our congratulations to these leaders and our thanks for their talent and skill, devotion and womanly simplicity.

59. Now, on behalf of the delegations of Dahomey, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Togo and Upper Volta and of my own delegation, I should like to take this opportunity to offer our warmest and friendliest congratulations to the Soviet delegation, and, through it, to the Government and people of the Soviet Union, on this anniversary of the glorious October Revolution. It is through that revolution that the Soviet Union has today become the great country and the great people whose important contribution to the liberation of the peoples and the fantastic growth of science and the arts elicits our recognition and admiration.

60. Mr. HASHI (Somalia): My delegation welcomes and has voted for the draft Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Constitution of my country guarantees the equality of all its citizens, irrespective of their sex. We are aware, however, that it is one thing to pass a legal instrument and another to implement it. It is a fact of life that the world of prejudice and force of custom still weighs heavily against women. However, it is the hope of my delegation that such prejudice will be eradicated by the adoption and implementation of the principles set forth in this Declaration. My country will strive to make every effort to live up to those principles.

61. My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to extend to the Chairman and members of the Soviet delegation its warmest congratulations on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the great October

Revolution. No event in contemporary history has had a greater impact on the social and political thinking of our times. I am happy to say that my country enjoys the friendliest relations with the Soviet Union and it is grateful to them for extending the hand of friendship to the developing countries; "a friend in need is a friend indeed". The Somali delegation wishes the people of the Soviet Union every happiness and all prosperity for the future.

62. Mr. MESTIRI (Tunisia) (translated from French): It is undoubtedly a happy coincidence which allows us to adopt the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women—and thus to celebrate the international endorsement of the emancipation of women, which we in Tunisia ardently support—on the day when a large part of mankind is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

63. The unanimous adoption of this Declaration will mark this day as doubly felicitous. We should like to convey to the Chairman of the Third Committee our congratulations on this success, which we in Tunisia welcome especially since in our country the emancipation of women and the choice of socialism are part of the same plan for progress towards the achievement of social justice. This is why we are happy to salute today the anniversary of the great October Revolution.

64. In its dimensions and repercussions, this event has long passed beyond the confines of the Soviet Union. It is part of the chronicle of the twentieth century, a fact of such importance for all mankind that it cannot be regarded as a local or even a national phenomenon. For all those who, like ourselves, claim to be socialists, and, indeed, whatever our political leanings, the October Revolution is an event of capital importance, whose developments have affected all the peoples of the world for half a century. We cannot fail to salute this glorious anniversary with all due solemnity.

65. You, Mr. President, who come from a socialist country, and whose election in this fiftieth anniversary year is a tribute both to your country, Romania, and to your own socialist revolution, know full well the importance assigned to the October Revolution by so many peoples both in 1917 and in the ensuing period.

66. For half a century, politics, economics and ideologies have been affected—whatever the standpoint adopted—by the magnificent transformation wrought by the peoples of the Soviet Union. What an enrichment for human experience, what an enrichment even for systems hostile to socialism, when, in an extraordinary effort at self-improvement, they transformed traditional societies and outworn concepts!

67. To those who have dreamed of ending the exploitation of man by man and achieving social justice, to those who have believed that we can control economic forces in order to create new, more equitable and more balanced social structures, to all those who have put their faith in the liberation of man, the October Revolution has represented—and is still identified with—the hope of one day seeing the outcasts of the earth attain in justice and democracy that

decent life which is the aim of every socialist movement.

68. For European socialists the Revolution meant the implementation of an ideology forced for the first time to come to grips with the harsh reality of national life, but for those who, like ourselves, have identified colonialism with the hideous exploitation of man by man and of one people by another, the Revolution has a dual significance.

69. First, it signifies that the path of revolution must lead not merely to the elimination of a régime, the triumph of an ideal or the confirmation of a theory, but to a veritable social transformation which preserves the dignity, equality and liberty of man.

70. Secondly, it has for us, the countries of the Third World, a meaning so important that we must seize this opportunity of stressing it: the October Revolution proves, by its fifty years of achievement, that an under-developed country can achieve progress, and even power, within a much shorter space of time than that normally required by traditionalist societies.

71. Attracted to the ideal of justice that socialism represents and at the same time desirous of putting into practice this basic doctrine, Tunisia several years ago chose the socialist path to development, progress and social justice.

72. Indeed, the October Revolution represents for a large part of humanity, and particularly for what is called the Third World, the real beginning of that rapid evolution of social and international relations which we are witnessing today. This is a fact, quite apart from any opinion we may have of the policy adopted by the States which have emerged from the socialist Revolution.

73. If a certain battle of words, or certain options regarding foreign policy, which have appeared in various places throughout the world have often been taken for socialism, this confusion, deliberately fostered by various interests, must not make us forget the essential point, namely, that first and foremost socialism is the progress and justice achieved within the societies that claim to be socialist.

74. It is in the name of this conviction that my country, which is working in faith and independence to build a socialist society, is happy to join its voice to those which are today saluting the great new direction taken by humanity in October 1917.

75. Since socialism is synonymous with equality and peace among men and with freedom from exploitation and from fear, we for our part do not believe in the inevitability of war, either within societies or between nations. The Bolshevik is no longer looked upon by a frightened world as a savage with a knife between his teeth. The country of the October Revolution is the champion of peaceful coexistence. May the joyful celebration of this anniversary by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its friends open up an era of prosperity for the peoples of the Soviet Union, an era of liberty and justice for all progress-loving nations, and an era of lasting peace among all the States of the world.

76. Mr. MOHAMMED (Nigeria): We have asked to speak to explain very briefly the votes which we

have just cast on sub-paragraph 2 (b) of article 6, and on the whole of the draft Declaration which has just been adopted.

77. First of all, however, Mr. President, I wish to ask for your indulgence to permit me to say a word with regard to our statement which we made at this morning's meeting [1596th meeting]. This is in connexion with the congratulations and the joy which we feel and share with regard to the one hundredth anniversary of the independence of the Government of Canada. The Canadians and the Nigerians are members of the same Commonwealth, but quite apart from that, we have been, we are and we hope that we shall continue to be very great friends. We have already expressed the joy which we sincerely share with all the Republics of the Soviet Union.

78. When we made our statement this morning we referred to the confusion which arose in the Third Committee regarding the votes cast on our own proposal to amend sub-paragraph 2 (b) of article 6, and which we had wished would be straightened out in the General Assembly. The fact that it has not shows that the majority of the Members of the General Assembly prefer the draft as it now appears. We see its merits and support it as well.

79. Finally, I should like to say how sincerely happy we are that the General Assembly, at least in the moral field, has shown the strictest compliance with Article 1 (3) of the Charter; that on this moral ground we have been able to agree and to co-operate in adopting one of the most far-reaching examples of our desire to promote freedom, understanding and human progress for the other sex. Perhaps it is most fitting, and without prejudice or discrimination towards you as a man, Mr. President, that a woman should be the Chairman of the Third Committee and that the draft Declaration was adopted under her guidance. We hope that this may represent for her a permanent gift to all her womenfolk for her lifetime.

80. Mr. MASHOLOGU (Lesotho): My delegation is very pleased to have been associated with the adoption of this historic Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The need for equal treatment of women has long been recognized in my country and is indeed embodied in our constitution, and for us this Declaration opens the door to fuller participation by women in the development of our nation and of the nations of the Third World. Already women have played a significant role in the public life of our nations and we look forward with confidence to the day when all vestiges of discrimination against them will have been removed.

81. In explanation of our vote, my delegation's views on articles 1 and 2 are that education will gradually eradicate any laws, customs, regulations and practices which discriminate against women. We have to accept the fact that customs change slowly, and experience has taught us that it is not wise to legislate against customs which people are not ready to part with. But we are confident that a well-balanced system of education will achieve more than an attempt to change customs by legislation. We would have been happier if, as the delegation of Ghana suggested in the

Committee, the last sentence of article 6, sub-paragraph 2 (b) had been deleted.

82. The delegation of Lesotho wishes to associate itself with the congratulations to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on this happy occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution. One has to look beyond ideological differences to appreciate fully the achievements of that great State especially in the cultural, scientific and technological fields. My delegation is optimistic and hopes that those achievements will be used for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind throughout the world.

83. Mrs. WILMOT (Ghana): It is always a happy event when the General Assembly reaches the point of adopting a momentous declaration in the field of human rights. Our happiness today, however, is much fuller because the Declaration that we have just adopted was formulated by the Third Committee under the distinguished chairmanship of a woman.

84. If anything underscores the necessity for the recognition by the international community of the equality of man and woman, the stewardship of Mrs. Radić should be it. The growing representation of female members in the Third Committee is also a recognition by the Member States of the United Nations of the principle of equality between the sexes.

85. The Declaration that we have just adopted is based on our belief that the time has come when all States and all peoples should acknowledge the human equality of man and woman in all spheres. Need I state that harmony and peace among the sexes is more feasible where there is acceptance of this fact?

86. We are not oblivious of the fact that those rights have already been recognized and guaranteed by a number of Governments, including my own; neither are we oblivious of the fact that long-cherished customs and traditions have served and continue to influence resistance to acceptance of the principle of equality between man and woman in many areas of the world. That is why we fully support article 2 of this draft Declaration. Thus this Declaration, while not a binding legal document, sets out principles that we hope will guide not only the Member States of the United Nations, but all the peoples of the world in the collective effort to ensure a just and better life for all, and to uphold and strengthen the fundamental human rights that the international community today believes should attach to every human being.

87. My delegation has been honoured to participate in the formulation and adoption of this Declaration which is another fulfilment of the high hopes that are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is our fervent expectation that in the very near future an international convention on the elimination of discrimination against women will be concluded by this Assembly and thus ensure a legal commitment to the principle of equality between man and woman by the nation States of the world.

88. I cannot conclude this speech without expressing the gratitude of my delegation to the members of the Commission on the Status of Women who submitted the original draft and especially the Chairman of the

Commission, Mrs. Helvi Sipilä, who have worked so hard towards the achievement of that goal. By the same token, my delegation expresses its thanks to the Polish delegation which initially proposed the drafting of a Declaration on this important question.

89. This is indeed an historic day for the whole world. My delegation, and that of Gambia, would like to associate ourselves most warmly with the delegations that have spoken before us in congratulating the Soviet delegation on the fiftieth anniversary of the great October Revolution. No matter what our individual attitudes may be to the result of that revolution, no one can deny that it has had and will continue to have a lasting influence on the course of human history and human relations. There can be no doubt that the forces making for social justice, for a restoration of human dignity and for the liberation of subject peoples all over the world, have in large part derived their modern inspiration from the noble ideals which were let loose by that revolution.

90. We salute the Soviet people. We congratulate them on their achievement, and wish them continued progress for the future.

91. Mr. KHANACHET (Kuwait) (translated from French): The General Assembly has just adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. My delegation had the duty and the honour to vote in favour of this Declaration, and it did so with particular pleasure and satisfaction because the principles it embodies are in perfect harmony with our own cultural, religious and social heritage. Indeed, in Arab and Islamic society, women had no need to wait for any such declaration before becoming emancipated; they were emancipated from the day when Islam first addressed its sacred message to all mankind.

92. I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my Government and of the delegation and people of Kuwait, to reiterate to the Soviet delegation the warm congratulations already expressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait in the general debate [1583rd meeting].

93. May I offer the Government of the Soviet Union and its courageous people our sincerest felicitations and our best wishes for their prosperity and happiness. The fiftieth anniversary of the great October Revolution will remain a decisive date in the history of mankind, and an event of the twentieth century whose significance will resound through centuries to come. The October Revolution blazed the trail for all peoples whose right and duty it is to fight for their liberation and independence. Other revolutions will explode throughout the world as long as colonialism in one form or another continues to spread its fatal shadow over any part of the world. In the Middle East, we shall continue to be inspired by the principles of these liberating revolutions in our task of eradicating from all the countries of the Middle East the cancer that has been imposed on Palestine by force, violence and conspiracy.

94. Dame Mabel MILLER (Australia): My delegation had no intention of speaking having made an explanatory

speech on our vote in the Third Committee, but we are so delighted at the successful passage of the draft Declaration that we feel we cannot refrain from saying a few brief words, and they will be brief.

95. As one of the drafting group under the Chairmanship of the delegate of Mexico appointed by the Chairman of the Commission on the Status of Women, Madame Sipilä, my delegation is intensely gratified at the reception the draft Declaration has received. The drafting was an arduous task and its passage through the Third Committee was not easy, but we did at least achieve a high degree of unanimity.

96. As previous speakers have said, this is one of the most important achievements of the United Nations over a period of years and we, too, hope that it will be accorded the widest publicity. Its adoption will give to women in all nations an incentive to achieve the status and the rights laid down and recommended in the draft. Let us hope that all nations will do their utmost to implement its terms.

97. Mr. KUZNETZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The Soviet delegation wishes to express its deep appreciation to all those who have today congratulated our country from this rostrum on the fiftieth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the fiftieth anniversary of the Soviet State. The delegations of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics have also asked me to transmit their expressions of gratitude.

98. During the fifty years of the history of the Soviet Union, the people of our country have worked hard to build a new society. The workers and peasants of Russia, who seized political power during the October Revolution, resolutely set about establishing, for the first time in the history of mankind, a society in which there would be no exploiting classes, no national or social oppression—a society of free and equal working people. At the time, many people outside our country called this the "Russian experiment". Our friends throughout the world believed that we would succeed; our opponents forecast that the "Russian experiment" would fail.

99. Now, fifty years after the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia, we can say quite definitely that, despite all the pessimistic forecasts, the Soviet people, under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, have overcome all obstacles, and fulfilled the fundamental task of the proletarian revolution—the establishment of a socialist society which is developing towards Communism.

100. The Soviet Union has taken huge strides forward from a state of destitution and backwardness to become one of the most powerful States in the world.

101. Industry, which at the outset had still been predominantly at the cottage industry level, has gone a tremendous way and become highly developed. The Socialist economy today is characterized by the largest hydro-electric power stations in the world, the most powerful blast-furnaces, and the most complex modern machinery. Space rockets blazing the way to outer space, spaceships making soft landings on the moon and Venus; a 70,000 million

electron-volt proton accelerator and many other achievements are samples of socialist science and technology in the mid-sixties.

102. One of the Soviet people's greatest assets is its confidence in the future. In our country there is and can be no unemployment; all citizens are assured of work and are guaranteed a livelihood in their old age. A country that was almost totally illiterate and suffered from mass epidemics that took an annual toll of several hundred thousand lives has been transformed into a country with the most progressive system of national education and medical services.

103. The Soviet people has more than once had to take up arms to defend its right to build a new life in its own country. This happened during the first post-revolutionary years, and again during the Second World War, when the fascist aggressors attacked our country in the hope of enslaving the Soviet people, and colonizing the Soviet Union. Our victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 against the German aggressors, which was gained by the Soviet Union in a military alliance with Poland, Yugoslavia, Britain, France, Czechoslovakia, the United States and other States will go down in history as a great exploit.

104. The foundations of our foreign policy were laid in the Lenin Decree on Peace in the first days of the victory of the Socialist Revolution.

105. Soviet foreign policy towards the socialist countries is based on the principles of socialist internationalism, brotherly friendship and comradely support, deep mutual trust and equal rights.

106. Soviet foreign policy supports those nations which are struggling against colonial oppression to achieve their national emancipation. We are particularly proud of the fact that it was on the initiative of the Soviet Union that the United Nations adopted the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [resolution 1514 (XV)].

107. Soviet foreign policy is characterized by friendship and close co-operation with the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America which are seeking to consolidate their independence.

108. Soviet foreign policy has always supported peace. The basic aim of Soviet foreign policy is to defend the achievements of the October Revolution and to provide the external conditions necessary for building a communist society in our country. In the international arena, our country recognizes the equality of all nations, large and small, the equality of all races and all nationalities, and strict adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. We do not seek a conflict with anyone. The Soviet Union believes that the problems of the relations between two different social systems should not be resolved by military force. It supports the development of mutually beneficial economic, trade, cultural and other relations on the basis of the well-known principles of peaceful coexistence.

109. The Soviet Union is opposed to the export of revolution. We do not think that socialism can be transposed from one country to another by the use of arms; socialism is the result of the internal development of every society in every country.

110. At the same time, the Soviet Union is resolutely opposed to any attempt to export counter-revolution, and to the aggressive policies of those who seek to suppress by force of arms the strivings of peoples towards freedom and progress. Our policy is always to link the struggle for a lasting peace with firm control of the aggressor.

111. We will continue to help the heroic people of Viet-Nam in their arduous and courageous struggle to defend the independence and freedom of their country. We support Arab States, which are struggling to assert their legitimate rights and interests against imperialist aggression. The Soviet Union is a loyal and reliable friend of the Republic of Cuba, against which imperialist plots are being hatched.

112. The Soviet Union attaches great importance to international co-operation in the struggle to curb aggression and strengthen international peace and security. We are ready to join forces with all those States which also reject war, and which cherish peace and the freedom of peoples.

113. The Soviet Union considers that the United Nations, of which it was one of the founder Members, can and should play an important and useful role in the strengthening of peace. The Soviet Government has always supported the basic principles of the Charter, in an effort to enhance the Organization's role in the maintenance of international peace and security. At every session of the General Assembly it has called for the examination of urgent and important questions connected with the maintenance of a firm peace throughout the world and the removal of the threat of war.

114. We are working for general and complete disarmament, and for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; we are trying to put an end to all tests with such weapons, and to prohibit the use of those weapons. Together with the other socialist countries of Europe, the Soviet Union has proposed a comprehensive and constructive programme which would firmly guarantee security in Europe, where both the world wars started.

115. Today our country is celebrating a great holiday. This is not only our national holiday, it is the holiday of all progressively minded people throughout the world.

116. May I once more, on behalf of the delegations of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian SSR and the Byelorussian SSR sincerely thank you for the kind words that were addressed to our country and people on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. We shall be glad to forward all those congratulations and good wishes to the Government and people of the Soviet Union.

117. With regard to the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Soviet Union fully supports the Declaration and voted in favour of it. The adoption of this important document

by this Assembly is a positive step towards ensuring equal rights for women in all spheres of national life—economic, social, political and cultural. We are especially happy that this important document was adopted on the day of the fiftieth anniversary of the Soviet State, in which the problem of the equality of women has been fully resolved.

118. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We have thus concluded consideration of agenda item 53.

119. May I associate myself with those representatives who have addressed congratulations and good wishes to the Soviet delegation and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the great socialist Revolution of October, a decisive event in the history of mankind, with which the aspirations of peoples for peace and progress are indissolubly linked.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.