



Chairman: Miss Maria GROZA (Romania).

AGENDA ITEMS 53 AND 60

Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (continued) (A/8003, chap. IX, sect. A; A/8027, A/8057, A/8061 and Add.1, A/8062 and Add.1 and 2, A/8117, A/C.3/L.1765):

- (a) **International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General;**
- (b) **Measures for effectively combating racial discrimination and the policies of *apartheid* and segregation in southern Africa: report of the Secretary-General;**
- (c) **Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, submitted under article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;**
- (d) **Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General**

The importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination and of the speedy granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights (continued) (A/7998)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mrs. SAWYER (Sierra Leone) said that in his statement to the General Assembly at the 1847th plenary meeting the Minister for External Affairs of Sierra Leone had expressed his Government's deep concern over the racial policies of South Africa. In defiance of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, South Africa, while enjoying full membership of the United Nations, was continuing to pursue its policy of racial segregation and suppression and to liquidate the opponents of *apartheid*. In South Africa racial discrimination was practised in its most blatant and inhuman form, to the indignation of the whole of Africa.

2. What made South Africa's continuation of that policy possible was that a military régime, backed by a powerful economy, was maintaining its slave society by increasingly violent means. Diplomatic pressure had failed to persuade the Government to change its attitude. Today the independent African States were helping the opponents of *apartheid* and the liberation movements in South Africa because of the failure of the Western Powers. If the Western Powers wished to persuade the Africans to avoid an armed conflict between black and white, they would have to declare their

unequivocal opposition to *apartheid* and throw their weight into a campaign to end it by universal denial of arms, international ostracism and economic pressure. However, experience had shown that the South African régime was prepared to defy world opinion: at the time of the Sharpeville massacre South Africa had been unanimously condemned at the United Nations, yet none of the policies which had helped to produce that incident had been altered.

3. The *apartheid* policies practised in South Africa were a daily affront to belief in human dignity and a constant insult to the dignity of the Africans. Africans must relentlessly maintain their opposition to *apartheid*. Sierra Leone could not afford to have any relations with South Africa, and within the bounds of international law it must support those who were struggling against *apartheid*.

4. The systematic attempt to degrade the non-white population of South Africa was not, as the South African Government claimed, an internal affair and therefore no concern of the world community. Every country in Africa felt the effects of South Africa's racial policies, for political and social pressures which were constantly working against racial equality were encouraged by the attitude of South Africa and events in that country.

5. Sierra Leone believed that the dignity of man was the one idea which could defeat racial discrimination. It was aware that any attitude of compromise would weaken the struggle against racial discrimination, and would therefore find it difficult, as the Prime Minister of Sierra Leone had stated in July 1970 in a telegram sent to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to remain a member of the Commonwealth if the United Kingdom resumed the supply of arms to a State which was deliberately pursuing a policy of racial discrimination. Sierra Leone was a small country, but it wished to see the fundamental human values to which it was committed applied in South Africa.

6. The former Prime Minister of South Africa, Dr. Verwoerd, had said that the problem was nothing else than to ensure white domination; but what sense was there in a country named South Africa being controlled by whites; what heritage would it hand on to its successors and, above all, how could the concept of white-dominated South Africa be reconciled with the cardinal precept of Christianity, love of fellow men? Any system founded on skin pigmentation stood condemned. The delegation of Sierra Leone considered that it was the duty of the Christian churches to denounce the situation in South Africa, to show that Christianity was not confined to holiness and theological exercises, to proclaim that racial discrimination was contrary to Christian principles and to give help and protection to those who were persecuted. Her

delegation was happy to note that the World Council of Churches had given some financial help to the liberation movement of southern Africa.

7. The entire system in South Africa was based on discriminatory legislation, which had been greatly expanded since the early fifties—to such an extent that the International Commission of Jurists had said that liberty was a thing of the past in South Africa. Under the Group Areas Act, also known as the “Ghetto Act”, each racial group was permitted to live only in a specified area, and voluntary associations between members of the various races were prohibited. The Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act of 1952, the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1956, the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964 were further pieces of legislation which reduced the Africans to slaves of the whites. Every day they remained in force was a day of shame for all mankind.
8. The Government of Sierra Leone welcomed the idea of designating 1971 as International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and supported the programme suggested in document A/C.3/L.1765, especially sub-paragraph (b) of suggestion B. The International Year would be an appropriate time for taking stock, before new steps were taken, of measures already adopted, and evaluating their effectiveness and the progress made in carrying them out. Sierra Leone also supported suggestion C, which was designed to expose the evils of racial discrimination.
9. It was unfortunate that only seventy-two Member States had signed the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and only forty-four States had acceded to it. Sierra Leone urged all States which had not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention.
10. Miss LAPOINTE (Canada) said that the phenomenon of racial discrimination still existed, despite the adoption of such instruments as the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, which represented a positive aspect of the international effort for the promotion of human rights. Accordingly, it was on the practical application of those instruments that the Organization must concentrate its activity in that field in the future. It should in particular persevere in its efforts to eradicate *apartheid*, the most odious form of racial discrimination.
11. Her delegation had rejoiced at the coming into force on 4 January 1969 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. Canada, which regarded the respect for human rights as a foundation-stone of Canadian society, had ratified that Convention. The Federal Government had recently adopted legislation on hate propaganda and genocide, and a very real legislative effort had been made in the field of human rights in recent years at both the provincial and the federal levels. Canada was determined to take a more active and effective part in international action concerning human rights and would regularly pursue consultations with the Canadian provinces, which under the Canadian constitution had jurisdiction in that sphere with a view to expediting the ratification of the
- other United Nations conventions dealing with human rights.
12. Canada fully subscribed to the idea of celebrating in 1971 an International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and it was in that spirit that it had supported General Assembly resolution 2544 (XXIV) and approved the programme drawn up by the Secretary-General. It was formulating a specific programme, the details of which it would communicate to the Secretary-General as soon as possible.
13. In view of the prejudices that continued to exist, it was necessary to reaffirm the principles of human equality and dignity. Her delegation was therefore glad to note that an international seminar on the harmful consequences of racial discrimination would be held in Cameroon in 1971 and commended the French Government for its initiative in organizing at Nice a seminar on the dangers of a recrudescence of intolerance in all its forms and on the search for ways of preventing such outbreaks. She hoped that those two meetings, organized under the advisory services of the United Nations in the field of human rights, would help the cause of interracial justice and harmony.
14. Mrs. HADIZA (Niger) said that the phenomenon of racism persisted, in many cases for reasons that were not admitted, whereas it would have disappeared if all the signatories of the Charter had respected their commitments. The Second World War, which some had sought to justify by the idea of the superiority of one race over the others, had ended apocalyptically. The United Nations Charter was based on the principle of the elimination of that scourge once and for all, but it was apparent that some persons, ethnic groups and Governments still believed that the world belonged to them. If the lessons of the past could not be used for the building of a better, saner world with equal rights for all, there would be still greater and more disastrous conflicts.
15. Her country condemned all manifestations of racism, wherever they occurred, because they were contrary to the elementary principle of justice and equity. It had supported resolution 235 (XV) on *apartheid* and racial discrimination adopted by the Council of Ministers of OAU at its fifteenth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa in August 1970. It was mindful that millions of Africans in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa were wholly deprived of their freedom and dignity. The continuation of that scandalous situation, which was condemned by world opinion, was made possible by the complicity of certain developed States which sought to safeguard their sordid interests. Racial discrimination was in fact merely a form of shameless exploitation of the weak by the strong.
16. Niger's constitution provided for the equality of citizens, whatever their race, sex or philosophical or religious beliefs, and those provisions applied to everyone living in the country, whether nationals or not. Accordingly, Niger had not hesitated to adhere to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. It would make its contribution to any international action designed, through appropriate measures, to bring about the total elimination of racial discrimination. Niger also endorsed the proclamation, in 1971, of

the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

17. She appealed, on behalf of the conscience of the world, to all States Members of the United Nations which

had not yet done so to give their full support to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and to ensure its implementation.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.