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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KABORE (Burkina Faso)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/44/240, A/44/409-S/20743 and Corr.1 and 2; A/44/574, A/44/575, A/44/595, A/44/617; A/C.3/44/L.3; E/1989/42 and Add.1-4)

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AGENDA ITEM 105: 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/44/526, A/44/548)

1. Archbishop MARTINO (Observer, Holy See) said that the priority which the Holy See attached to the eradication of racism and all forms of discrimination had been manifested clearly by a number of events since the opening of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. In his apostolic visit to southern Africa, Pope John Paul II had spoken out strongly against discrimination, especially apartheid. A major document on racism had been published by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and had been the focus of a seminar on discrimination co-sponsored by the Holy See Mission and held recently at the United Nations in New York. The Pope had also visited Madagascar, Reunion, Zambia and Malawi, where he had once again condemned apartheid and all forms of discrimination. He had also chosen the theme "To build peace, respect minorities" for his 1989 World Day of Peace message.
2. The Holy See condemned racism both within the Church and without. However, not all means of combating it were completely justified. The Church supported the United Nations in its efforts to remove the temptation of violence and to solve the problem of apartheid in a spirit of dialogue with due regard for the rights of all parties. His delegation applauded all efforts to use peaceful methods to combat racism and apartheid. Foremost among those working for peaceful solutions was the Secretary-General who, during his visit to Namibia, had missed no opportunity to reject violence and to advocate dialogue and democratic change as the only suitable foundation upon which Namibian independence could be built. However, political and legislative changes were not always effective instruments of racial conciliation because racism was rooted not only in law but in the human heart. Through its preaching and, its schools, the Church was continuing to promote the formation of a non-racist consciousness.
3. The Holy See believed that it was necessary to widen the definition of racism, which the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace had described as "contempt for a race characterized by its ethnic origin, color or language". While apartheid was

(Archbishop Martino, Observer,  
Holy See)

the most marked and systemic form of racism, racism was also demonstrated in the form of anti-semitism, which had reached its zenith during the Second World War and was still prevalent today.

4. The Holy See had not hesitated to denounce the subjection of the Palestinians to humiliating conditions in their own country, and it defended equally the right of the Israelis and of the Palestinians to a homeland.

5. Another form of racism was "social racism", which existed when poor peasants or urban disadvantaged were exploited as a work force or as sex objects without regard for their rights and dignity by wealthier classes. A solution to this problem should come about on two fronts: moral condemnation and eradication of the poverty that forced people to resort to such drastic means of survival.

6. The Holy See was also concerned about rising xenophobia directed against foreigners and immigrants. Laws were needed to guard against economic and other forms of discrimination against these groups. Indeed there were all too many recent examples in all parts of the world of violence against minority groups.

7. His delegation also condemned racism based on religion. Discriminatory legislation aimed at religious minorities, who frequently belonged to an ethnic group different from that of the majority, took many forms, including denial of citizenship, relegation to a second-class status in respect of housing, educational opportunities, employment and access to public services, and imposition of a particular religious law on all citizens.

8. Looking to the future, the Holy See saw in vitro fertilization and genetic manipulation as new forms of racism and potential threats, and urged that laws be put in place to guard against abuses that smacked of eugenics.

9. Lastly, in some countries the mass media and the entertainment industry fostered racism in the way in which they portrayed - or failed to portray - racial groups. Governments and those involved in the communications media should co-operate with citizens and people of good will to try to find ways to resolve that problem.

10. Despite the many existing forms of racism, there had been notable advances towards human solidarity resulting, not least, from United Nations initiatives, including the International Covenants and the work of the Commission on Human Rights. His delegation heartily supported those Member States who had called for a greater emphasis within the United Nations system on human rights questions and thanked the many religious groups and non-governmental organizations that promoted racist-free societies. The Church wished to reaffirm its pledge to work unstintingly towards the elimination of racism.

11. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that, more than 40 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and despite the fact that the international community had endorsed the Declaration on many occasions, policies and practices based on prejudice and discrimination persisted in many parts of the world. There had even been new instances of forced assimilation and relocation motivated by religious or ethnic discrimination. A particularly abhorrent manifestation of racism was South Africa's policy of apartheid, an institutionalised system of racial discrimination that denied basic human rights and fundamental freedoms to the majority of the country's people.
12. Japan earnestly hoped that the new Government of South Africa would resolutely take concrete and effective steps to abolish apartheid and that the international community would intensify its efforts to induce the Government of South Africa to do so by encouraging progressive and enlightened movements within South Africa to take more effective action.
13. Japan had repeatedly made clear its opposition to all forms of racism and racial discrimination and had taken measures to comply with the various resolutions on apartheid that were among the strictest taken by any industrialized democracy. It had restricted its relations with South Africa in the fields of diplomacy, trade and investment, as well as sports and cultural and educational exchange the pressure exerted on business leaders in Japan to exercise restraint in trading with South Africa had resulted in 1988 in an approximately 15 per cent decrease in trade in yen terms, followed by a 6 per cent decrease in yen terms for 1989 over the corresponding period of the previous year.
14. Japan would continue to urge South Africa to take concrete measures to bring about the legalisation of the African National Conference and other anti-apartheid organizations, the prompt initiation of dialogue with representatives of various sectors of the black population, the lifting of the state of emergency and the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees and other political prisoners. It saw the recent decision by the new Government to release a number of political prisoners as an encouraging sign and hoped that it would lead to further releases and to genuine political dialogue. In that connection, the great importance which Japan attached to political dialogue had led it to intensify its exchanges with regional leaders, including black leaders in South Africa.
15. During the 1989 fiscal year, Japan had increased its assistance to the victims of apartheid in South Africa by providing \$US 600,000 for medical, educational and housing projects. It was also providing educational and training assistance for young black citizens of both South Africa and Namibia. In 1989, it had contributed \$US 400,000 to the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for southern Africa.
16. The Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had played an important role in galvanizing the international community into taking measures to eradicate all forms of racial discrimination. In recognition of the important goals of the Decade, Japan had made contributions in the past three years to the Trust Fund for the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial

(Mr. Sasaki, Japan)

Discrimination and would continue to do so in 1989. Effective co-ordination within the United Nations system was essential in order to implement the Programme of Action. The activities carried out by the Centre for Human Rights against apartheid should be well co-ordinated with measures taken by the Department of Public Information and other United Nations organs and by non-governmental organizations.

17. Although some progress had been made in promoting self-determination, recent developments in certain parts of the world should be watched carefully. It was gratifying to note that genuine progress continued to be made in the independence process in Namibia. That effort demonstrated the useful role which the Organization could play. In accordance with its desire to promote self-determination and peace, Japan was providing about 30 people to take part in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group.

18. It was deplorable that the fighting among the people of Afghanistan was continuing even after the withdrawal of Soviet forces. The establishment of a broad-based government reflecting the popular will of the Afghan people was essential to ensure true stability in that country. In order to enable the Afghan people to rebuild their country, Japan contributed to the Office of the United Nations Co-ordinator for Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan and provided personnel for medical assistance and infrastructural improvements to facilitate the repatriation of Afghan refugees.

19. In August 1989 Japan had actively participated in the International Conference on Cambodia aimed at achieving a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in that country. Although no agreement had been reached on the establishment of an international control mechanism, it had been devoted to send a fact-finding team to survey the situation. He hoped that the current session of the General Assembly would provide added momentum towards reaching a peaceful settlement. Japan would extend further assistance and continue its efforts to achieve a comprehensive political settlement on the basis of the right of the Kampuchean people to self-determination.

20. Mrs. SYLLA-LINGAYA (Madagascar) said that special tribute should be paid to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for its contribution to efforts to combat racism and enhance the enjoyment of human rights. A long-term solution should be found to the financial crisis impeding the work of that Committee.

21. It was encouraging to note the activities undertaken at the national and international level within the framework of the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. She expressed satisfaction at the efforts made to co-ordinate the activities of the Decade in order to increase the effectiveness of the campaign against racism. Her delegation fully supported the suggestions and recommendations concerning the activities of the Second Decade contained in document E/1989/42/Add.1, particularly those relating to the struggle against apartheid. The international community must increase the pressure on the

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(Mrs. Sylla-Lingaya, Madagascar)

South African Government through comprehensive and mandatory sanctions to force it to put an end to its racist policy. Moreover, although the independence of Namibia was close at hand, recent events showed that the international community must remain vigilant in order to guarantee the holding of free and impartial elections.

22. She noted with satisfaction the acceptance in principle by the parties to the conflict in Western Sahara of the peace plan proposed jointly by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. Direct negotiations between the parties concerned should lead to an agreement on the organization of a free and impartial referendum on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

23. The intifadah and the proclamation of the independent State of Palestine in 1988 reflected the fundamental desire of the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination. The oppressive practices of the Israeli occupation forces and the flagrant violations of human rights in the Palestinian and other Arab occupied territories underscored the urgent need for an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in order to achieve a comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict. The Palestinians must have the possibility to exercise their right to self-determination, and all the peoples of the region must be able to live within secure and recognized boundaries.

24. The use of mercenaries was a violation of the principles of international law and constituted a threat to international peace and security. In that connection, her delegation expressed satisfaction with the quality of the report on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (A/44/526) and recommendations which it contained. The current climate favouring diplomatic dialogue should promote efforts to eliminate mercenary practices and facilitate the drafting of an international convention against the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries.

25. Ms. BACH-TOBJI (Tunisia) said that, although there was a positive trend in international relations towards an improvement in the human rights situation in the world, the new international climate was still marred by racism, racial discrimination and the most virulent form of racism, apartheid. Countries were participating in the implementation of the Programme of Action by taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures. For example, the Tunisian Government had ratified in 1989 the International Convention against Apartheid in Sports, demonstrating its strong commitment to efforts to put an end to apartheid.

26. It was gratifying to note that there were currently 128 States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, reflecting the international community's recognition of the immoral nature of discriminatory practices and its commitment to eradicate them. She reaffirmed her delegation's support for the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and commended the spirit of self-sacrifice demonstrated by its

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