



Sixth session

REQUEST OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CHINA FOR REVISION OF THE
CHINESE TEXT OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION
AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE

Memorandum by the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, by resolution 260 (III) of 9 December 1948, approved the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In accordance with article XIII thereof, the Convention came into force on 12 January 1951.

2. Article X of the Convention provides:

"The present Convention, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall bear the date of 9 December 1948".

3. Article XVI of the Convention provides:

"A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any Contracting Party by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Secretary-General.

The General Assembly shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such request".

4. The Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations signed the Convention on 20 July 1949 and, on 19 July 1951, he duly deposited with the Secretary-General the formal instrument of ratification by his Government of the Convention. This instrument accepted the Convention by reference to the Chinese title and in the form which had been made authentic by the adoption of article X by the General Assembly.

5. Concurrently, however, with his deposit of the instrument of acceptance by China of the Convention, the Permanent Representative transmitted to the Secretary-General a letter in which he requested the latter to take steps to revise the official Chinese text of the Convention. He submitted a new Chinese text incorporating the amendments which were proposed by his Government with a

view to bringing the Chinese text into greater uniformity with the other official texts of the Convention. The Secretary-General formally acknowledged receipt of the proposed revised text but noted that, in view of the provisions of article X and of the fact that the Convention had been adopted and had entered into force, the texts in all five official languages were equally authentic and he was, therefore, without authority to undertake their revision.

6. The Permanent Representative of China thereupon confirmed that his letter transmitting the proposed revised text should be deemed to constitute the notification in writing addressed to the Secretary-General in accordance with article XVI of the Convention, by which any Contracting Party may at any time request revision. The Secretary-General has accordingly placed upon the provisional agenda of the sixth session this request of the Chinese Government in order that the General Assembly may, in conformity with the second paragraph of article XVI, "decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such request".
