

extent of the violation of human rights in Chile, the Committee had heard a suggestion that it should act as if nothing had happened and that the progress of history would help the Chileans settle their own problems. It should be remembered, however, that the processes of history were sometimes very painful and that fascism had been responsible for the deaths of millions of human beings. The Committee could not therefore merely allow history to take its course. In conclusion, he said that his delegation agreed with the representative of Saudi Arabia that democracy had often been reduced to a meaningless ritual, and that applied especially to the current situation in Chile.

45. Mr. BARODY (Saudi Arabia) pointed out that his reference to the ritualization of democracy applied equally to some of the great historical upheavals, such as the French and Russian revolutions, the origins of which could be traced to the desire to secure for all mankind the enjoyment of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. It should also be noted that the Chilean people would have been spared a civil war if there had been no outside interference in their affairs. His attitude sprang from the same conviction which had formerly led him to oppose the argument that colonial empires should be

maintained because decolonization would be followed by internecine strife within the former colonial territories. Those who demanded the restoration of democracy in Chile should remember that the two greatest crusades for democracy in the current century, those led by Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt during the First and Second World Wars, had failed to achieve their ultimate goals, namely a world without war, and the four freedoms enshrined in the Atlantic Charter.

46. Mr. BROAD (United Kingdom) reminded the representative of Saudi Arabia of Winston Churchill's statement to the effect that while democracy might be a very bad form of government, no one had found anything better.

47. Mr. BARODY (Saudi Arabia) said that it was significant that such a statement should have come from an arch-colonialist who had also stated that he had not become Her Majesty's Prime Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. He concluded by once again urging the Committee to exercise restraint when considering situations such as that currently existing in Chile.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.

2147th meeting

Monday, 3 November 1975, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

A/C.3/SR.2147

AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council [chapters III (sections F, G, I, L and M), IV (sections A and C) and V] (*continued*) (A/10003, A/10284, A/10285, A/10295, A/10303, A/C.3/637, A/C.3/639, A/C.3/640, A/C.3/L.2168)

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (*continued*)
(A/10003, chap. V, sect. B)

Protection of human rights in Chile (*continued*)
(A/10285, A/10295, A/10303, A/C.3/639, A/C.3/640)

1. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that his delegation viewed with grave concern the current situation in Chile and the flagrant violations of human rights perpetrated by the Chilean Fascist military junta. The international community had an obligation to prevent a recurrence of crimes such as those committed during the 12 years of Hitler's Fascist tyranny. The people and Government of the German Democratic Republic took an active part in the world-wide movement of solidarity with the people of Chile, a movement comprising representatives of diverse political convictions, religious creeds and ideologies. Irrespective of their differing ideological views, the democratic forces in the world were united in their condemna-

tion of the Fascist reign of terror in Chile. The crimes of the Fascist dictatorship were confirmed by the progress report (A/10285, annex) of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group to inquire into the present situation of human rights in Chile, which gave a true picture of the continuous violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Chilean working people. The report left no doubt as to the existence of a Fascist dictatorship with all its cruelty and brutality and its destruction of, and disregard for, all democratic principles and traditions. The glorious democratic traditions of the Chilean people, which the junta representatives continually invoked in order to mislead world public opinion regarding the current situation, had been broken by the treacherous assassination of the democratically elected President, Mr. Allende, by Fascist military forces. Chapter III of the report clearly proved that the Fascist junta had annulled the democratic Constitution. However, his delegation was convinced that one day the democratic traditions of the Chilean people would triumph.

2. He referred to the account given in the progress report of the role and position of the Directorate of National Intelligence (DINA), the Gestapo of Chile, and of the war waged by Chilean fascism against Chile's own people. That war was only a prelude to wars against other peoples, which was in the nature of fascism, as shown by the history of Hitler's Germany. It was significant in that respect that the

representative of the junta, speaking before the General Assembly at the 2376th plenary meeting, on 6 October 1975, had opposed international détente as a “narcotic” and “anaesthesia”.

3. His delegation welcomed the adoption in 1974 by the eighteenth General Conference of UNESCO of resolution 11.3 (see A/10285, annex I, appendix, sect. E), which recalled that the fundamental purpose of UNESCO was to contribute to peace and security in order to further respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. With regard to the criminal activities of the Chilean military junta, that resolution had confirmed its condemnation and rejection of fascism as a doctrine and a system of government hostile to the educational, scientific and social development of peoples, and as a threat to the development of friendly relations and co-operation between States. His delegation also supported decision 3 (XI)¹ of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which recalled that 1975 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the liberation of all peoples from Hitlerite fascism and condemned all forms of racism and nazism. In fact, on the basis of many details contained in the progress report of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group, it was not difficult to prove the identical nature of German nazism and the junta system in Chile. The Nazi concentration camps had their counterparts in Chile, and evidence had emerged from the International Commission of Inquiry into the Crimes of the Military Junta in Chile, held a few months earlier in Stockholm, that the junta had tortured 95,000 people during its two years in power, and was still detaining 8,000 political prisoners who, like Luis Corvalán, the seriously ill Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Chile, were suffering inhuman treatment. His delegation therefore emphatically demanded the immediate release of Luis Corvalán and the other political prisoners, commended the Secretary-General and the Presidents of the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth sessions of the General Assembly on their efforts to achieve that end, and hoped that similar measures would be taken by the President of the current session. The arrest of socialist leaders like Ricardo Lagos and the increasingly repressive measures against initial supporters of the régime, such as Pedro Araya Ortiz, underlined the urgent need for United Nations action. Even more compelling reasons were provided by the junta's brutal practice of torturing babies to extort confessions from their mothers, as reported in the journal *Culture française*, and by the disappearance without trace of nearly 2,000 people since its seizure of power. In that connexion, he recalled that important international instruments drawn up as a result of the victory over nazism and a number of United Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 2438 (XXIII) and resolution II of the International Conference on Human Rights,² held at Teheran in 1968, imposed on the United Nations the obligation to prevent a revival of fascism. His delegation therefore urged the United Nations to take the appropriate action with respect to the situation in Chile, and called on all States to take measures, in accordance with their domestic legislation and the Charter of the United Nations, for the protection of human rights in Chile.

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 18*, chap. VII.

² See *Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.XIV.2), p. 5.

4. In conclusion, he said that the United Nations should prepare a register of junta criminals, just as lists of war criminals had been drawn up by the Allies in the Second World War, and expressed his delegation's support of the proposal of the Special Committee against *Apartheid* to investigate the growing partnership between the Pinochet régime and the Vorster régime in South Africa.

5. Ms. KVANMO (Norway) said that Norway, as a result of its humanitarian concern at the serious violations of human rights which had been taking place in Chile, had been a sponsor of General Assembly resolution 3219 (XXIX), which had urged the Chilean Government to restore and safeguard the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in that country. It had welcomed the initial willingness of the Chilean Government to accept the visit of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group to Chile and to assist it in its work. Such working groups were valuable instruments for strengthening United Nations machinery for dealing with human rights questions. The Norwegian Government had therefore officially expressed its regret at the surprising withdrawal of the Government of Chile from its agreement to co-operate with the *Ad Hoc* Working Group. In that connexion, her delegation could not accept the argument put forward by the Chilean Government in document A/C.3/639 that, while the visit of the Working Group was being prepared, different organizations had continued to condemn Chile for alleged violations of human rights. Particular reference was made to a resolution, of which Norway was a sponsor, on the situation of women in Chile, which had been adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year (see E/5725). Her delegation considered that resolution to be in full harmony with the spirit of General Assembly resolution 3219 (XXIX), and the contents of the progress report of the Working Group clearly justified that view.

6. She commended the Working Group on its progress report, and expressed the hope that Chile, as a party to various international instruments in the field of human rights, would fully respect the provisions of those instruments and promptly take all necessary measures to restore and safeguard basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. In conclusion, she appealed to the Chilean authorities to allow the Working Group to visit Chile without further delay, so that it could fulfil its mandate and base its final report on the widest range of sources and in particular on first-hand evidence gathered in Chile.

7. Mr. VON KYAW (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the Federal Republic of Germany had consistently supported the various measures taken by United Nations bodies to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Chile. It was also endeavouring to utilize its bilateral relations with Chile to improve the situation and had been able to contribute to the release of a considerable number of political prisoners; 1,300 refugees from Chile, who had had to leave their country for political reasons, were currently living in the Federal Republic of Germany, and a list had also been established of 200 Chileans who would be welcome in the Federal Republic of Germany as soon as they received permission to leave Chile.

8. His Government was concerned about the large number of political prisoners who were still in custody, as well as

reports of the continuing practice of abusive methods of interrogation and of ill treatment of such persons; while it recognized that the Chilean Government was making efforts to improve the situation, it did not agree that that situation need no longer give rise to concern on the part of the international community. It was necessary above all to find the right approach to the problem. In that regard, the refusal of the Chilean Government to admit the *Ad Hoc* Working Group to Chile, in spite of a prior commitment, had certainly complicated the matter. His delegation would continue to insist on the usefulness of a visit by the Working Group to Chile as an instrument not only of inquiry but also of establishing the necessary dialogue.

9. The negotiations which were under way to obtain a satisfactory draft resolution were complicated by the differing approaches taken by some delegations or groups of delegations. His delegation would not agree to the misuse of human rights issues for ideological purposes. There was no place for political opportunism in that context. The credibility of the United Nations in its task of promoting universal respect for human rights, in accordance with the principles established by the Charter, must not be undermined.

10. With regard to the kind of action that the Committee could most usefully take in order to contribute to the improvement of the human rights situation in Chile, he considered that the Committee's attitude should be based on moral considerations; human rights and fundamental freedoms could be effectively promoted only on the basis of clear principles. At the same time, no decision should be taken which could lead to an aggravation of the situation in Chile; there was a danger that, as a consequence of some of the positions adopted in the Committee, the Chilean Government would come to the conclusion that, from its standpoint and under the conditions prevailing in Chile, a further stiffening of its internal and external attitudes was the only alternative available to it. The Committee should therefore bear in mind that the essence of the problem was the threat to the existence, liberty and dignity of the individual human being. In the opinion of his delegation, the situation called for the adoption of those measures which would be most conducive to genuine improvement; in particular, further confrontation must be avoided. Only extremists would profit from increased radicalization and polarization, as a result of which the cause of human rights in Chile would suffer yet another setback.

11. Mrs. SHAHANI (Philippines) said that the question under consideration was a very serious one, since it involved singling out one Member State for violations of human rights. It should therefore be approached with sobriety and a sense of responsibility, in order to maintain the credibility of the Committee as a guardian of human rights. In that connexion, she recalled the terms of Article 1 of the Charter, which spoke of the United Nations as a centre for co-operation and for the harmonizing of relations among States, regardless of ideology. The positions adopted by Member States on particular issues depended on the extent to which their vital national interests were affected by those issues. That was so with regard to decolonization, the new international economic order, and other matters of comparable importance. The Committee should therefore study the implications of its action, and strive to be fair and objective.

12. Her delegation had abstained at the preceding session in the voting on the resolution on the question currently under discussion. At that time the *Ad Hoc* Working Group had not yet been established, and her delegation had wished to satisfy itself with regard to the procedures for dealing with communications concerning violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It was therefore pleased to state that its reservations had been overcome and to commend the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on its progress report. It noted with regret, however, that the Chilean Government had withdrawn from its original pledge to allow the Working Group to enter its territory. In studying the progress report her delegation had been particularly struck by the massive and flagrant violations of human rights described therein, including the practice of torture and the abuse of women and children. It therefore hoped that the draft resolution adopted on the subject would be consistent with the gravity of the situation, would be drafted in sober and moderate terms, and would contain constructive and positive proposals which would enable the Working Group to continue with its task.

13. Mr. INFANTE (Chile) said that his delegation would express its views on the subject under consideration at a subsequent meeting. Furthermore, he did not wish to request the right of reply in respect of every slanderous statement that was made. However, he wished to point out that Ricardo Lagos, who, according to the delegation of the German Democratic Republic, had been arrested in Chile, had been staying at a hotel in New York just one week previously.

Draft declaration on the rights of disabled persons
(A/C.3/L.2168)

14. The CHAIRMAN noted that no other delegation had asked to be heard at the current meeting on the question of the protection of human rights in Chile and invited the representative of Belgium to introduce the draft declaration on the rights of disabled persons (A/C.3/L.2168), of which Belgium was a sponsor.

15. Mr. NOTHOMB (Belgium), introducing the draft declaration in document A/C.3/L.2168, said that physical and mental disability was a misfortune with which all peoples had to contend, regardless of their social system, geographical situation or degree of development. Various bodies of the United Nations, such as the ILO, UNESCO, WHO, and UNICEF, undertook activities on behalf of the handicapped. The Economic and Social Council regularly studied the problem and that year had adopted resolution 1921 (LVIII) on the prevention of disability and rehabilitation of disabled persons. In 1971 the General Assembly, by its resolution 2856 (XXVI), had adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons. His delegation had considered that there was a need for a declaration on the rights common to both mentally and physically handicapped persons. Although the draft declaration, of which Austria, Bangladesh, Ireland, Morocco and Thailand had become sponsors, had borrowed a great deal from the 1971 Declaration, that did not mean that the latter would thereby lose any of its importance, for it dealt with one particular aspect of the problem. However, it had been decided to replace the expression "mentally retarded person" used in the 1971 Declaration by the expression

"disabled person", which was being used increasingly, for example in Economic and Social Council resolution 1921 (LVIII), and which had the advantage of including the congenitally handicapped.

16. The draft declaration reproduced more or less the excellent preamble of the 1971 Declaration. It stressed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights because the question of the rights of the disabled was a question of human rights and not a question of charity or paternalism. He noted in connexion with the sixth preambular paragraph that the implementation, at both the national and international levels, of action for protection of the rights of the disabled required financial means which some developing countries might have difficulty in providing and to which they could not in any case accord a high degree of priority.

17. Operative paragraph 1 attempted to define the concept of a disabled person. A disabled person was a person who was forced to depend on other persons because of a physical or mental deficiency; the definition did not include those suffering from minor although permanent injuries, or healthy children who were entirely dependent on their parents but were not handicapped. The representatives of the ILO and WHO had suggested a few small additions to operative paragraphs 5 and 6, and those suggestions were under consideration by the sponsors. Operative paragraphs 8 and 9 reproduced articles from the 1971 Declaration and extended the relevant provisions to all handicapped persons. In operative paragraph 9, rather than using the word "guardian", which normally applied only to the mentally handicapped, the phrase "legal aid", had been used, since that could be applied to both physically and mentally handicapped persons and included guardianship for the mentally handicapped. Operative paragraph 10 had been added on the proposal of the representative of Jamaica. In many remote or backward areas, handicapped persons were considered by their families and communities as monsters and treated as such, and it was indispensable that those families and communities should be fully informed of the rights of their handicapped members and should treat them as human beings.

18. He hoped that delegations would study the draft declaration during the following few days and that the discussion could be resumed at a subsequent meeting. It was precisely because handicapped persons were unable to campaign for their rights themselves that the international community had a duty to promote respect for the rights and dignity of such persons.

19. Miss RICHTER (Argentina) said that her delegation would prefer it if the draft declaration was not put to the vote during the current session. There was insufficient time for Governments to consult with national bodies concerned with assistance to disabled persons, and to co-ordinate their respective efforts in making suggestions on the draft declaration. For example, her delegation had doubts regarding operative paragraph 1 and wished to consult with the appropriate bodies in Argentina. The Committee should also bear in mind resolution 1921 (LVIII) of the Economic and Social Council and the work done by UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO on the subject.

20. Mrs. JONÄNG (Sweden) said that her country attached great importance to improving the situation of disabled persons and considered that they should be guaranteed the same fundamental rights and the same possibilities for a satisfactory existence as other citizens. It believed that it was the task of society to safeguard the opportunities of disabled persons to enjoy as full and independent a life as far as possible. Society must therefore give disabled persons the opportunity to obtain gainful employment or ensure them a satisfactory economic level of living through pensions or other means. Disabled persons should also be guaranteed adequate medical and social care and rehabilitative treatment. The main aim of such efforts should be to give disabled persons the opportunity to be integrated into society where living conditions, education and employment were concerned. It was important that the basic principles of their fundamental rights should be continually stressed in international statements and declarations on the subject so that politicians and the public would remain aware of their needs and problems. Her delegation therefore welcomed draft resolution A/C.3/L.2168.

21. Mr. POEDJIOETOMO (Indonesia) said that his delegation, which supported the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on Social Progress and Development (General Assembly resolution 2542 (XXIV)), was aware of the importance of ensuring the right of disabled persons to the enjoyment of a full life. It had therefore become a sponsor of the draft declaration on the rights of disabled persons and hoped that it would provide guidelines for the protection of the rights of such people and enable them to develop their skills. Economic and Social Council resolution 1921 (LVIII), which his delegation had supported, called upon Governments to request assistance from the United Nations, since some countries could make only limited efforts to promote the welfare and ensure the rights of disabled persons. His delegation hoped that the draft declaration would encourage Governments to avail themselves of that opportunity. Counselling and rehabilitation measures were also required at the national and international levels to help disabled persons to become self-sufficient and to take part in the development plans of their countries.

22. Indonesia had about 1,185,000 physically disabled persons and provided care for destitute, handicapped and disabled children and adults. To that end, the Government had established specialized institutions to provide for childrens' individual needs. In co-operation with UNICEF, the Department of Social Affairs had organized training courses to help disabled children and additional efforts were being made to provide facilities for disabled persons in areas such as education, guidance and job training. The Government had also established a programme, called Bina Karya Loka, which provided employment opportunities for handicapped persons. Indonesia recognized, however, that, as a result of unequal treatment, many disabled persons had been denied full participation in various aspects of the life of society. Only through the affirmation of equal rights for disabled persons could they achieve their full potential. His delegation therefore hoped that the draft declaration would help to overcome the prejudices which prevented disabled people from living normal lives.

23. Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria) said that his delegation welcomed the draft declaration, which was a useful step towards guaranteeing the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by disabled persons. It strongly supported the idea that disabled persons had the right to respect for their human dignity and the right to lead as normal a life as possible. All the principles of the draft declaration were in accordance with his Government's policy and with Austrian administrative provisions. With regard to operative paragraph 3, his delegation considered that the principle that disabled persons had the same fundamental rights as their fellow citizens of the same age should not be an obstacle to placing mentally disabled persons under guardianship, as provided for in the Austrian legal system.

24. The CHAIRMAN announced that Turkey had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2168.

25. Mr. MAVROMMATIS (Cyprus) said that the draft declaration amounted to an almost complete code of the rights of disabled persons, and his delegation therefore wished to sponsor it. He himself had been associated with efforts to assist disabled persons in Cyprus, where, with the help of the ILO and other specialized agencies, a centre for the rehabilitation of mentally and physically disabled persons had been set up, after a survey of all disabled persons in Cyprus had shown the need for such a centre. When a person entered the centre, the degree of his disability was assessed; he was then trained, and efforts were made to integrate him into the economy. Disabled persons were encouraged to set up their own co-operatives and they were given priority in Government employment; the private sector was also encouraged to employ them.

26. He considered that draft resolution A/C.3/L.2168 should be adopted by consensus.

27. Mrs. OGATA (Japan) said that her delegation attached great importance to the adoption of the draft declaration, which represented another significant contribution to the goal of protecting the rights and assuring the welfare of all persons. The adoption of such a declaration would supplement and complete the efforts undertaken by the Committee which had led to the adoption of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development and the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons. In that connexion, she stressed that her delegation thought the Committee should be able to take a decision on the draft declaration at the current session, since the text had been available for a month.

28. With regard to activities of a humanitarian and social nature, the United Nations should make the greatest efforts in areas where needs were most universal and where the victims of negligence, if not abuse, were the weakest. That category included the rights of mentally and physically disabled persons and she was sure that no Government would deny the need to protect the rights and assure the welfare of such persons. The adoption of the draft declaration would benefit the disabled in two ways. First, it would focus world attention on the importance of the rights of disabled persons, one of whose greatest problems was to overcome existing prejudices about their disabilities. A specific list of the rights of the disabled would help them to assert themselves as human beings worthy of the same respect and privileges as the able-bodied. In that connexion,

the dissemination of information concerning the rights of the disabled was indispensable and her delegation hoped that the draft declaration would be given the widest publicity by United Nations bodies. Secondly, the United Nations could and should provide the necessary technical assistance to help educate, rehabilitate and provide employment for the disabled throughout the world. In most countries, there was a shortage of trained personnel who could carry out such tasks. United Nations technical assistance could also be provided for the improvement of existing architectural and other physical facilities, which were usually designed without consideration for the disabled. Her delegation took note with satisfaction of the initiative of the United Nations in considering the views of experts on barrier-free design and hoped that more information and technical assistance of that kind would be provided to interested Governments.

29. Her country, which had a total of 1,720,000 disabled persons, comprising 1,410,000 physically disabled and 310,000 mentally disabled, was making renewed efforts to attend to the needs of such persons, who had, regrettably, not received adequate care and protection. In a way, many of the disabled were victims of modern life. Thus, the congestion and speed which characterized modern life subjected many persons to nervous tension and accidents on streets and in factories, with the result that they required specialized care and attention. The main thrust of welfare measures for the disabled in recent years in Japan had been to take disabled persons out of nursing homes and institutions, where they were treated as patients or persons who were less than normal, and return them to their family environment. That change was a welcome one, but required assistance of a personalized nature which was very demanding in terms both of funds and of personnel. Such a programme could, however, be implemented only when public facilities had become barrier-free, so that the disabled could commute from their homes to schools, work and medical centres with relatively few difficulties. Her country had not yet been fully successful in enabling physically handicapped persons to receive all the benefits of the educational system and enjoy full employment opportunities, but there was growing awareness of such needs and the draft declaration would encourage Japan in the effort it had been making. Her delegation was therefore happy to be a sponsor of the draft declaration and hoped that it would have the desired impact in all countries so that the weakest members of society might enjoy all their rights.

30. Miss CABALLERO (Mexico) said that the problems of physically and mentally disabled persons were of common concern to all countries and her delegation was therefore grateful to the representative of Belgium for bringing the question of their rights to the attention of the Committee and preparing the draft declaration contained in document A/C.3/L.2168. That initiative was an important step in ensuring that the international community and the United Nations would take effective measures to deal with the problems of disabled persons and to ensure respect for their rights as human beings.

31. Miss BOCETA (Spain) said that her delegation wished to join the sponsors of the draft resolution.

32. Miss MARKUS (Libyan Arab Republic) thanked the sponsors of the draft declaration for their efforts and

willingness to help disabled persons to live a normal life, find work and enjoy the rights to which all citizens were entitled. She noted that operative paragraph 7, which provided that disabled persons had the right to live with their families or with foster parents, did not, however, make it clear whether a disabled person had the right to choose his foster parents if he had no family members with whom he could live.

33. Mrs. Azra ALI (Bangladesh) said that her delegation, as was evident from the fact that it had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution, fully supported the initiative taken by the Belgian delegation; it also appreciated the emphasis placed by the representative of Indonesia on the fact that some developing countries could not afford to deal with the problems of disabled persons and therefore needed technical assistance from the United Nations. Bangladesh, as a very new country, was one of those which would welcome such assistance in helping to care for disabled persons, whose condition was a tragedy not only for their families but also for society.

34. Miss BETTON (Jamaica) said that her delegation supported the draft declaration and welcomed the initiative of the representative of Belgium concerning a matter of vital importance for social progress and development. It was the kind of proposal which had earned the Third Committee its respected reputation as the conscience of the United Nations.

35. It was easy to underestimate or even ignore the human needs of those who were least able to acquire and exercise control over their condition. Disabled persons fell conspicuously into that category because their physical condition made them especially dependent on others for access to the basic requirements for a decent life and the exercise of their human rights. Her delegation therefore recognized the national and international obligation to focus on the needs and entitlements of such persons and to indicate guidelines for acceptable policies. Although not all Member States were in a position at present to implement the provisions of the draft declaration, defining the goals to be achieved with regard to the rights of disabled persons constituted a necessary first step.

36. Her delegation supported in particular operative paragraph 10 and thanked the sponsors for including it. Her country was concerned about the need to ensure that disabled persons were shown the fullest understanding of their condition by their families and communities so that they might be integrated into the life of society. Such understanding should be ensured by appropriate information and educational means. It was in that spirit that her delegation fully supported the draft declaration and hoped that the Committee would adopt it unanimously.

37. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said his delegation was of the opinion that the question of the rights of disabled persons was of the greatest importance. It nevertheless agreed with the representative of Argentina that Governments should be given time to study the draft declaration, in which certain improvements might be made. For example, operative paragraph 6 should include a reference to the right to work. His delegation therefore requested that the draft declaration should not be put to a vote at the current session.

38. Mr. THOMAS (Liberia) said that his delegation fully supported the draft declaration and felt that the problems of disabled persons should not fail to evoke the sympathy of the international community. His country was very concerned about its disabled citizens and spared no effort to assist them in every possible way. The draft declaration was a most commendable initiative, particularly since it called for national and international action to ensure the protection of the rights of disabled persons. His delegation therefore wished to become a sponsor of the draft declaration.

39. Mrs. KALLIGA (Greece) said that the draft declaration was a very important step towards ensuring the full protection of the rights of disabled persons, whose problems were of the greatest concern to her country. Her delegation therefore wished to become a sponsor of the draft declaration.

40. Mrs. DE BARISH (Costa Rica) said that her delegation commended the Belgian delegation for its initiative in preparing the draft declaration on the rights of disabled persons, which it fully supported and of which it had become a sponsor. The draft declaration filled a gap in the series of United Nations instruments concerning the observance of the human rights of all persons and supplemented the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 1386 (XIV)) and the Declaration of the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons. It contained the necessary humanitarian provisions to ensure the rights of disabled persons and the enjoyment of all the opportunities to which every citizen was entitled.

41. Miss GUERRA (Madagascar) said that, although her delegation supported the draft declaration, it agreed with the representative of Bangladesh that many developing countries could not ensure proper care and treatment for disabled persons because they did not have the necessary infrastructure. Her delegation therefore hoped that the draft declaration would contain provisions to give developing countries assistance in caring for disabled persons.

42. Mr. CHORFI (Morocco) said that, for years, his country had been concerned with the problems of disabled persons and had therefore established several centres for their training and rehabilitation. The needs of such persons were, however, enormous and, as a sponsor of the draft declaration, his delegation hoped that the United Nations would make technical and financial assistance available to developing countries to enable them to help disabled persons live normal lives. It also hoped that the Committee would adopt the draft declaration by consensus.

43. Mrs. MARICO (Mali) said that the draft declaration was of the highest social and humanitarian importance and that the Committee had a duty to give priority attention to the problems of physically and mentally disabled persons, who should be able to enjoy the rights to which all citizens were entitled. To that end, society must give such persons an opportunity to enjoy social and economic security and must prevent them from being subjected to discrimination and unequal treatment. Her delegation was glad to be a sponsor of the draft resolution and urged its adoption by consensus.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.