

Council, to the General Assembly. The various studies so far completed had been based on replies by Governments to the Secretary-General's request for information on those subjects. Those studies were of a high order and the best possible use should be made of them. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3269 (XXIX), the Commission on Human Rights was organizing a programme of work to consider those studies and make recommendations accordingly. That was a continuing task and the submission by six delegations of a draft declaration on human rights and scientific and technological developments at the preceding session had therefore been a complete surprise to his delegation.

23. In the human rights field, the United Nations had traditionally adopted declarations on important subjects but it had been the custom for them to be considered first in the smaller bodies which could give time to the detailed work required in drafting and balancing different aspects and then, when wide areas of agreement had been reached, transmit them to such bodies as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In the present case, however, the sponsors had submitted a draft declaration never seen elsewhere. At the preceding session, therefore, the United Kingdom and other delegations had felt it necessary to submit amendments which were by no means all-inclusive but were designed to point out some of the major areas where their attitude was different from that of the sponsors.

24. The subject was a very complicated one, with a variety of implications for questions other than the specific one under discussion. While his delegation was grateful to the sponsors for taking the initiative in drafting a declaration, it felt that the text as it stood was vague, unsubstantial, repetitive and rather imprecisely drafted. At the preceding session, his delegation had felt that it had been submitted in relation to concerns other than the specific item on the Committee's agenda, an impression confirmed by the sponsors' attempt to link it with the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Final Act of

which was signed at Helsinki in August 1975, and with détente in general. The United Kingdom had been closely concerned with both matters but thought they had little to do with the subject under discussion. Any declaration should take full account of the various studies made on the wide range of subjects involved and not limit itself to vague and questionable assertions on the role of science and technology in international relations. His delegation therefore hoped that the sponsors would decide to revert to the well-tried way of elaborating such declarations, namely, referring it to the Commission on Human Rights to be considered along with the substantive consideration of the different issues so that the Commission could eventually draft such a declaration for adoption by the General Assembly. He accordingly appealed to the sponsors, as an indication of their interest in securing the widest possible participation in the drafting of such a declaration, to agree to having the text sent to the Commission. If they insisted on pushing through the text at the current session, his delegation would be reluctantly compelled to submit further amendments in order to ensure that the text, even in its present unsatisfactory form, was closer to the ideas and language it held important.

25. Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed his delegation's regret that the business-like, calm atmosphere in which the Committee had begun its consideration of the very important question before it had been shattered by slander by one delegation. That same slander concerning the substance of a draft declaration to which certain countries attached great significance and the aim of which was to benefit mankind had also disrupted the discussion at the preceding session. At that time, his delegation had made a precise reply to that slander which he felt need not be repeated. However, as the delegation concerned had put forward new arguments, his delegation reserved the right to revert to the question at the next meeting.

*The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.*

## 2137th meeting

Tuesday, 21 October 1975, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

A/C.3/SR.2137

### AGENDA ITEM 69

**Human rights and scientific and technological developments: reports of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/10146, A/10162, A/10226 and Add.1 and 2, A/C.3/L.2144, 2146-2148)**

1. Mr. MATHIAS (India) said that science and technology constituted one of the ambivalent facts of modern life. On the one hand, it was impossible for any community or individual to dispense entirely with them, for to a great extent they offered the means by which hunger, disease,

poverty and illiteracy could be wiped out; yet, on the other hand, such a potential blessing for the human race could easily become—and indeed had already become—a powerful agent for the oppression of nations and individuals and for the dehumanization of man. It was often said that science and technology were “neutral”, and that only the way in which they were used would determine whether they worked for the welfare or the destruction of man. While that might be true in theory, it should not be forgotten that science and technology had a dynamism and a thrust of their own, moving them inevitably towards the ever newer, the faster, the more powerful. Other effects of the progress

of science and technology were to widen the gap between the industrialized and developing countries and between the rich and poor within each nation, and to create a mentality that undermined those spiritual values without which the wealth and diversity of human culture would be seriously diminished. For all those reasons, it was essential for each nation to take conscious and deliberate decisions of a political and social nature in order to determine the type, direction and quality of the scientific research to be pursued and the technologies to be adopted, so as to ensure the true welfare of their people.

2. India, with one of the largest scientific communities in the world, was well aware of the dual need to foster scientific research and simultaneously direct it for the benefit of the masses of the Indian people. An outstanding example of the imaginative use of technology in India was the inauguration during the current year of the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), by means of which educational programmes for adults and children relating to literacy, civic rights and responsibilities, modern agricultural techniques and family welfare were received by stationary satellite in 2,400 villages in six States of central India. If successful, that experiment would be extended throughout the land, thus providing a quick, effective and relatively cheap means of meeting some of the basic educational needs of the masses. The development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes was another example of the use of science and technology for the welfare of a country, especially if that country was poor in fossil fuels and had uncertain water resources. India was planning its third and fourth nuclear power stations, through which it hoped to provide enough power for agriculture.

3. It was necessary, however, for developing countries to evolve technologies suited to their actual needs, and not to imitate blindly the labour-saving, capital-intensive, automated technology used in the West. India's research and experience had shown that there was a whole range of manufactured goods which could be produced with equal efficiency and quality by simple labour-intensive technologies. The developing countries should co-operate with each other and share experiences in that field, rather than invest their scarce resources in importing Western techniques which would deprive thousands of people of their jobs and thus deprive them of their basic right to work. He did not wish to suggest that advanced research and technology should be reserved for the rich countries, but only to stress that developing countries should, through mutual co-operation, discover technologies suited to their real needs, while at the same time adopting sophisticated technology where necessary.

4. Referring to the international problems created by the rapid advance of science and technology, he noted first the growing gap between the minority of affluent countries and the vast majority of poorer lands. Ninety-five per cent of scientific research was taking place in the small number of developed countries and was directed mainly to the solution of their problems and to maintaining and further improving their own standards of living. A striking example was to be found in the field of medical research, where vast sums were being spent in the affluent countries to prolong life through such sophisticated techniques as organ transplants, while hundreds of millions of human beings were

still struggling against ravaging endemic diseases and lack of basic medical care. Moreover, the affluent nations, owing to the research facilities and high salaries they were able to offer, continuously drew off the best scientific talent from the rest of the world, thus further aggravating the disparity between rich and poor countries. He therefore stressed the urgent need for the United Nations and its specialized agencies to foster in all countries, rich and poor, serious research efforts to solve not only the problems of the affluent nations but also the urgent problems of humanity, such as population, development, international social justice and ecology. His delegation considered that those problems should be the main focus of research at the new United Nations University established in Tokyo, and that the University should set up campuses in several other countries of the world, chiefly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where research on human problems affecting those continents could be undertaken. A striking example of what could be achieved was provided by the development of high-yielding strains of wheat and rice by international teams of scientists at the international research institutes in the Philippines and Mexico. The United Nations could also help in the transfer of technology from the rich to the poor countries.

5. Referring to the unbridled genetic research being undertaken in some countries, he said that it was fraught with grave dangers for the future of the human race, and suggested that the United Nations should take the initiative in drawing up a suitable code to govern such research. His delegation also considered that the United Nations should look into the use of electronic devices for spying on other nations, and hoped, finally, that the forthcoming session of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea would result in an agreement which would ensure that the wealth of the seas was not appropriated by the same handful of advanced countries which currently enjoyed the use of 80 per cent of the world's resources.

6. Ms. WENSLEY (Australia) said that her delegation welcomed the fact that priority consideration was being given to the item on human rights and scientific and technological developments. The Committee, instead of being deterred by the complexity of the subject, should respond to the urgency of its challenge to evaluate the benefits to be gained from the dramatic evolution of science and technology, to identify its adverse consequences, and, most important, to formulate both national and international codes and standards to ensure that dangers were minimized and benefits maximized and that humanitarian principles were not abused. It was precisely in the area of the protection of human rights that the main responsibility of the Committee lay. In its discussions of the subject and in considering the documents and draft declaration (A/C.3/L.2144) before it, and particularly when contemplating decisions of importance to Governments and the international community, the Committee should take into account the work which had been or was being carried out by other United Nations bodies, such as the Economic and Social Council and UNCTAD, or specialized agencies, such as WHO, FAO, the ILO and UNESCO, the decisions adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held in Mexico during the current year, and the seventh special session of the General Assembly, as well as the declaration of the group of consultants summarized

at the 2135th meeting of the Committee by the Director of the Division of Human Rights.

7. Scientific and technological developments were of far-reaching importance and affected every aspect of life, including the right to food, work, privacy, health, education and culture, an adequate standard of living, leisure and social security. Consequently, there was a need for a rationalization of effort, for the exchange of information and for the sharing of research findings. In that connexion, she agreed with the representative of India that Governments must formulate their national policies in a manner appropriate to their own level of development and their own cultural and ethical standards. However, because of the interdependence of the modern world, scientific and technological progress concerned all peoples everywhere, and it was therefore imperative to seek international approaches in working out appropriate international policies. Different countries of course had different approaches to the subject. Developing countries were preoccupied by the need to have access to information permitting the flow of technologies, while countries already possessing advanced technology were more concerned with environmental problems and with the protection of the rights of the individual. However, those different preoccupations, rather than conflicting with each other, simply demonstrated the need for constant consultation, better exchange of information, improved co-ordination and the need to devise effective machinery within the framework of the United Nations system to ensure the achievement of a balance between scientific and technological progress and the intellectual, spiritual, cultural, moral and economic advancement of humanity.

8. Her Government, by its co-operation with and participation in United Nations action in connexion with human rights and scientific and technological developments, had consistently shown that it was ready to work for the achievement of that goal.

9. The foregoing considerations led her delegation to the conclusion that the Committee would be acting precipitately if it were to adopt a draft resolution on the subject at the current stage. In particular, the draft declaration in document A/C.3/L.2144 did not adequately reflect all the dimensions of the subject. It was very one-sided in its emphasis on the impact of science and technology on economic and social development, without doing justice to their impact on civil and political rights and individual freedoms. It was far from the declaration envisaged by the group of consultants, who had recommended that the following should be taken into account in any draft declaration adopted on the subject: population planning; protection against the hazards of atomic energy; human experimentation; implications of new biological and medical discoveries; modification of mental processes by medical means; the social and ethical implications of the extension of life and of new definitions of and attitudes to death; the social and ethical choices in relation to equality in the provision of health protection and medical care. Nor did it take due account of the important recommendations of the seventh special session of the General Assembly relating to the application of science and technology to development. Moreover, to be effective and of lasting significance, the declaration must take into account the

results of all the work being done on the subject by United Nations bodies. In that connexion, she noted that the Commission on Human Rights, on the recommendation of the Third Committee, would give priority to the subject at its thirty-first session. It would therefore seem logical to await the outcome of that session, of the sixtieth session of the Economic and Social Council in April and May 1976 and of the fourth session of UNCTAD before making any final judgements or decisions. All Governments should also be given full opportunity to voice their opinions on the draft or any other draft which might emerge. Thus far only 14 countries had replied (see A/10226 and Add.1 and 2) to the Secretary-General's note of 17 April 1975 requesting Governments to submit their comments and suggestions on the draft declaration, a fact which seemed to indicate that the majority of Governments needed more time to formulate their views and were not prepared to take hasty decisions on documents which, because of their complexity and the importance of their subject matter, demanded the most serious examination. Her Government therefore could not support the adoption of the draft declaration as it stood, and felt that it should be referred to the Commission on Human Rights for more detailed consideration.

10. In conclusion, she expressed her delegation's support for the proposal by the French representative that the Committee should recommend the inclusion of the subject in the agenda of the thirty-first session of the General Assembly as a matter of priority.

11. Mr. GOLOVKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the development of science and technology had become an inseparable feature of the development of mankind, but that, as experience showed, it introduced both favourable and unfavourable elements into human life. It contributed to the growth of the material well-being of peoples, the development of their spiritual strengths and abilities, and social progress; at the same time, in the hands of certain Powers, scientific and technical progress contributed to the arms race, the creation of new means of mass destruction, the increase in possibilities for interference in the internal affairs of States, the exhaustion of natural resources and the growth of unemployment. Science, which was in essence humanitarian, was transformed by those Powers into an instrument for the support of inhuman activities which threatened the interests of the peoples of all countries, both developed and developing.

12. It was essential that the United Nations should take steps to put an end to the use of achievements in the fields of science and technology for the purpose of undermining international peace and security and violating human rights. It should accordingly adopt a document proclaiming the principles to be adhered to by States in applying the results of scientific and technological progress, and draft declaration A/C.3/L.2144 met that need. The General Assembly had already carried out the necessary preparatory work, for it had discussed the text of the draft declaration at its twenty-ninth session. His delegation therefore did not think that the draft declaration needed to be referred to the Commission on Human Rights. Furthermore, the competence of the Committee should not be underestimated; indeed, some very important declarations had been prepared in committees and at plenary sessions of the General Assembly in the past. At the session which marked the

thirtieth anniversary of the Organization, the Assembly could, through the efforts of the Committee, adopt a declaration on the use of scientific and technological progress in the interests of peace and for the benefit of mankind, such as that contained in document A/C.3/L.2144. In confirming the lofty principles and aims of the draft declaration, the Assembly would be making a constructive contribution towards creating the most favourable conditions for the further development of international co-operation in all spheres.

13. It had been said in the Committee that science and technology should not be used to increase social and material inequality, and in that respect he noted that in the Ukrainian SSR all the achievements of science and technology were directed towards the further improvement of the living conditions of the people and the effective realization of human rights. In 1974, 85 per cent of *per capita* national income in his country had been obtained as a result of scientific and technological progress. The people's material well-being was increasing and their cultural level was rising year by year; the supply of housing was being increased through the application of new methods of construction and the use of new construction materials, and technical innovations were introducing new elements into daily life. Ukrainian scientists were carrying out fruitful work in the exploration of outer space; indeed they had devised the experiment on the growth of micro-organisms which had been carried out during the Soviet-American Soyuz-Apollo programme. Constant attention was paid in the Ukraine to the training and further education of skilled workers in order to keep pace with the requirements of scientific and technological progress. It should be noted that scientific and technological progress increased material well-being and the raising of the educational and cultural levels were being combined with full employment of the working people. Work was currently being completed on a new five-year development plan which would pay particular attention to questions of scientific and technological progress. In view of the great significance of science and technology in the life of contemporary society, his delegation considered that the initiative of the States which had introduced or amended the draft declaration was very timely and that in the context of the strengthening of the process of détente and the broad development of international ties in the sphere of science and technology the adoption of the draft declaration would play a very positive role.

14. Mr. KAPLLANI (Albania) said that his delegation was well aware of the importance of the role played by science and technology in the development of human society; the Albanian people whose bitter pre-liberation past had left them a legacy of enormous backwardness, had respect for progressive world knowledge and science. From their own experience they could show how, when the people became masters of their country, science and technology could become a factor contributing to the development and well-being of the whole society. Experience had also taught them that the foreign capitalists who had pretended to help Albania but had later occupied the country had used scientific and technological progress ruthlessly to exploit and enslave Albania. The Albanian people had witnessed the same phenomenon with the Soviet revisionists who sabotaged and blackmailed their country. That was why they had always opposed and would continue to oppose all

the efforts of the imperialist Powers, and especially of the two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, to misuse scientific and technological inventions in order to enslave, threaten and blackmail the peoples.

15. The draft declaration (A/C.3/L.2144) sponsored by the Soviet revisionists referred to the need to ensure that the results of scientific and technological developments were used in the interests of strengthening international peace and security. However, it was clear that it was precisely the imperialist Powers, and in the first place the two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, which were undermining international peace and security by devoting vast sums of money to research in the military field and the production of new destructive weapons, in rivalry and collaboration with one another. The out and out demagoguery of the two super-Powers could not be disguised by the fine words of declarations or blurred by pompous parades and rendezvous in outer space which allegedly demonstrated détente and the principles of peaceful co-existence among States having differing social systems. The Albanian people's leader, in an address he had delivered in October 1974, had said that the activities in outer space of the Soviet Union and the United States were not being pursued for the good of mankind.

16. His delegation wished to stress that sovereign peoples and States genuinely aspired to economic and social development and were interested in co-operation with each other and in profiting from the benefits of worldwide progress in science and technology; however, they could not allow themselves to be deceived by imperialist and revisionist demagoguery and by the so-called concern of those who, while pursuing an aggressive policy of neo-colonialism and of dividing the world into spheres of influence, made no attempt to use scientific and technological progress in the interests of peace and for the benefit of mankind, but on the contrary were leading the world into new carnage.

17. Mrs. GERÉB (Hungary) said that the question of human rights and scientific and technological developments was one of the most important problems facing mankind. Science and technology, in an age marked by very rapid advances in both areas, had become a decisive factor in economic development, and thus had a profound effect on all aspects of human society. That was amply demonstrated by the Secretary-General's report (A/10146). It was essential to ensure that the rapid progress of science and technology and the new possibilities for the economic and social development of peoples which it opened up would be used to promote the welfare of mankind in the present-day world and in the future. Her delegation therefore supported the draft declaration in document A/C.3/L.2144, which it considered to be a positive response to the problems raised by the progress of science and technology. She disagreed with the view that it lacked substance and was one-sided. A careful study of the text would show that it contained all the elements necessary to provide clear and precise guidelines for the future work of various United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies. It would stimulate international co-operation for the strengthening of international peace and security, which were obviously essential to ensure that scientific and technological developments were used solely to promote the well-being of all peoples.



18. The peaceful use of science and technology would help to ensure the right of peoples to self-determination and sovereignty, economic and political equality among States, and the satisfaction of the basic needs of their populations. Unfortunately, however, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, science and technology were being used to foster the development of weapons of mass destruction. The variety of weapons was becoming increasingly large and dangerous, and certain types were even capable of producing environmental and genetic changes. The United Nations therefore had the duty to prevent the continued use of science and technology for the purposes of the arms race, and the draft declaration would make a notable contribution to the achievement of that goal.

19. Hungary was doing its utmost to use the results of scientific and technological progress for the benefit of its population as a whole, to accelerate economic development and to improve working conditions, health and cultural life. It had achieved positive results in that connexion, such as the reduction in working hours, the lightening of the workload in many branches of industry and agriculture, and the lessening of the monotony of work caused by automation.

20. The Secretary-General's report had noted that scientific and technological developments could lead to a widening of social and material inequalities. That was an additional reason why her delegation supported the adoption of the draft declaration, which would help to prevent such adverse consequences. She therefore urged the Committee to adopt the draft declaration unanimously, without referring it to other United Nations bodies for further consideration, since the latter had already had the opportunity to study it and submit their comments, and the declaration as it stood reflected the aspirations of peoples to economic and social progress, to the satisfaction of their basic needs, and to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

21. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) recalled that in its resolution 10 (XXVII),<sup>1</sup> the Commission on Human Rights had once again defined the fundamental problems arising from the protection of human rights in connexion with scientific and technological developments. The range of interrelationships between scientific and technological developments and fundamental rights was wide and covered the political, economic, cultural and social fields, thus affecting the entire situation within a given country. Those interrelationships also influenced the development of individuals and their protection from the misuse of the results of scientific and technological developments.

22. In principle, scientific and technological progress was a positive process, as it was a prerequisite for improving material and cultural life and working conditions. However, the results of technological development improved living conditions only if they were systematically used by the State and society for the benefit of the people, and that was not a process which developed by its own momentum. Every State therefore had the humanitarian duty to commit

itself fully to that process. There was no doubt that technological improvements might affect the human environment adversely and have negative effects on the health of mankind. One example was the automation of production, which sometimes gave rise to monotony in various jobs, causing a decrease of efficiency in some fields. Furthermore, under the conditions of the market economy, many workers had lost their jobs. Other effects of scientific developments had not yet been fully evaluated; for example, those of synthetics on the human organism.

23. It was clear that under certain social conditions the process of technological development jeopardized the right of human beings to health, comprehensive education and employment. In his delegation's view, it was important not only to analyse and evaluate the level and trends of scientific and technological developments but also to take comprehensive measures to prevent negative trends. In that connexion, he stressed the importance of measures to protect and safeguard the rights of individuals as well as of those affecting mankind as a whole, including the problem of the maintenance and strengthening of peace, international security, détente and disarmament. The experience gained during the past few years in dealing with the agenda item under consideration within the framework of the United Nations had shown that there was no chance of making much progress if attention was concentrated on the solution of isolated questions. He therefore welcomed the fact that at its twenty-ninth session the General Assembly had given greater prominence to the positive aspects and the international importance of the matter. That was the main purpose of the draft declaration in document A/C.3/L.2144, of which his delegation was a sponsor.

24. He reaffirmed his delegation's unswerving support of the principle that the results of science and technology must be used in the interests of peace, freedom and independence of peoples, as well as for economic development and the protection of human rights.

25. Furthermore, measures must be taken to prevent an interference in the internal affairs of States. In that context, he stressed the importance of the disarmament measures proposed by the Soviet Union at the twenty-ninth and current sessions of the General Assembly and the principles embodied in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, signed at Helsinki on 1 August 1975.

26. It was essential to concentrate on the positive aspect of development for mankind in dealing with the item under consideration. In his delegation's opinion, the adoption of the draft declaration would be an important step towards meeting that requirement.

27. Mr. SOBHY (Egypt) said that scientific and technological developments had a tremendous impact on the life of peoples, although that impact might vary from one country to another. While such developments had beneficial effects, it was essential not to forget the serious dangers inherent in the misuse of technological progress. Those dangers were not only material and physical but also affected the cultural, political and social aspects of people's lives. Scientists were often reproached for being short-sighted and for failing to see the possible consequences of their

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 4*, chap. XIX.

experiments. The fact was that the effects of scientific and technological progress encompassed all aspects of man's life and could affect his fundamental freedoms and rights. In that connexion, he noted that scientific and technological advances had led to the development of listening devices, the use of which constituted a violation of human rights. At the international level, the activities of spy rings were often based on the use of sophisticated inventions, which violated the principles of international law and constituted a threat to international peace and security.

28. Considerable material resources enabled scientists to carry out their programmes. It sometimes happened that their experiments were carried out with the sole objective of dominating a given country. The international community had a responsibility, at both the national and international levels, to protect the health and human rights of individuals.

29. His delegation had been happy to learn that the studies undertaken by the Commission on Human Rights were proceeding satisfactorily and it was awaiting the conclusions of those studies.

30. He recalled that in resolution 3269 (XXIX) the General Assembly had decided to defer consideration of the draft declaration until its thirtieth session and had requested the Secretary-General to bring the draft and the amendments thereto to the attention of Member States for any comments or suggestions they might wish to make on them. In the light of the replies received so far, it could be concluded that all Governments had recognized the importance of the issue and had no objection in principle to the draft declaration. Some States had submitted amendments and others had suggested additions. In his delegation's view, they had been intended to make the draft declaration more precise and it should be easy to incorporate them.

31. His delegation supported the idea of such a declaration and agreed in general with the draft which the Committee had before it. He noted that General Assembly resolution A/RES/3362 (S-VII) had a separate chapter on science and technology and called for the drawing up of an international code of conduct for the transfer of technology. His delegation thought that the preamble to the draft declaration should refer to that resolution and to the need to provide assistance to countries which had not reached the same level of development in the scientific and technological fields as the rest of the world. Such a draft declaration could be adopted as a basis for an international code of conduct. In his delegation's view, the draft should be studied carefully from all angles, particularly that of the interests of developing countries.

32. Miss DÍAZ (Venezuela) said that the Committee was considering the relationship between scientific and technological developments and human rights precisely because the misuse of science had reached dangerous limits and must be halted. Her delegation did not believe that scientific progress was being fully used for the benefit of peoples. Indeed, science was an excellent instrument of domination. It was essential to emphasize that the misuse of technological resources must be attributed to the advanced countries, which were imposing it on mankind by means of power politics. The growing use of technological advances

to violate human rights constituted a serious problem to which the Committee should give all possible attention.

33. Certain countries with advanced technology were advising other developing countries with regard to the suppression of the very human rights which they vigorously defended within their own frontiers. Thus it could be seen that for certain Powers the importance of safeguarding human rights varied depending on whether the countries they were advising were advanced or simply refused to be trained in such practices, or, on the other hand, were countries whose backwardness obliged them to accept such degrading assistance. The Secretary-General's report (A/10146) referred to the population explosion and its relationship to economic progress. In that connexion, she said that it was essential to differentiate between family planning and birth control. The former was desirable and should be carried out wherever it led to social improvements, in particular with regard to the education of children, but it should in no way be subject to an undefined economic pattern which would have the effect of maintaining the *status quo* to the benefit of some and the detriment of others. Birth control, for its part, seemed to serve the latter objective, which was materialistic and ran counter to human rights. It was well known that there were international assistance projects for the purpose of setting up mass sterilization programmes in developing countries. The purpose of such programmes seemed to be to deny justice to the poorer peoples and reduce the number of persons demanding justice, since it was easier and less costly to dominate a small population than a large one.

34. With reference to family planning, she said that it must be understood as a comprehensive plan which, while protecting human rights, took into account not only the needs of each country but the psychological, educational, health and other elements involved in the exercise of such rights. Her delegation doubted that over-population of itself would lead to the loss of the individual's identity or disrupt his psychological equilibrium in relation to society. The truth was that the alienation of the individual was brought about by a multitude of factors which made up the life of a people, such as education, environment and social conditions.

35. In conclusion, she said that in dealing with the issue at the international level it was essential to bear in mind that international economic justice and co-operation should be primary factors in the solution of that problem, which was of fundamental concern to the developing countries.

36. Mr. PEDERSEN (Denmark), referring to the Secretary-General's report (A/10146), said that he wished to make a few remarks regarding section 2 of chapter II, on the harmful effect of automation and mechanization of production on the enjoyment by working people of the right to just and favourable conditions of work.

37. Rapid industrial development in his country had brought about a substantial change in the work done by semi-skilled workers. In 1960, legislation had been enacted to provide for the vocational training of semi-skilled workers in order to enable them to adjust to new technologies and to meet the changing demands of the labour market. The legislation established guidelines for

systematic, practical and theoretical training under identical programmes throughout the country, while leaving it to labour and management organizations to determine the curricula. The bulk of the cost of training was covered by central and local government funds.

38. The next few years would see a growing need for vocational training of adult manpower. Technological advances would make new demands on the knowledge and skills of the labour force and it was to be expected that the development of society would require the transfer of manpower from one sector to another. To meet those needs, an essential element of a labour market policy designed to maintain the maximum employment level must be to develop the training system still further and to make it more flexible.

39. With regard to the question of humanization of the working environment, a matter to which his country attached great importance, he said that his Government had recently introduced a bill to supersede existing legislation relating to industrial safety, health and welfare. The new legislation was designed to provide a safe and healthy working environment and placed particular emphasis on the development of a wider concept of health.

40. In addition to the studies carried out by government bodies on ways and means to humanize the working environment, a great deal of work was being done by individual undertakings, often in co-operation with industrial organizations and scientific institutes. Particular attention was given to ergonomic factors such as the adjustment of work processes, the work site, technical facilities, and health hazards posed by dangerous agents and substances, having special regard to elderly and handicapped workers.

41. With regard to the draft declaration in document A/C.3/L.2144, his delegation still considered it premature to adopt a declaration containing such substantial provisions without taking sufficient time to consider their implications carefully. It also felt that the draft declaration did not adequately reflect the provisions of the Proclamation of Teheran<sup>2</sup> with regard to the preservation of individual rights and freedoms, which had been set forth subsequently in several resolutions adopted by the United Nations and supported by his country. His delegation therefore thought that further consideration of the draft should be postponed until it had been examined by the Commission on Human Rights.

42. Mrs. BEHNAM (Iran) said that the world was becoming increasingly aware of how the misapplication of scientific discoveries could endanger the basic rights and freedoms of individuals. It was evident that scientific and technical advancements were indispensable for development, and the developing nations were determined to embark on the course of industrialization and technological development. However, it was imperative to reduce the harmful side effects of the process as much as possible and put an end to the misuse of scientific discoveries. The developing nations had the advantage of being able to profit from the experiences of the industrialized countries and

avoid their mistakes, but it was essential for them to pinpoint those mistakes carefully.

43. One of the most important problems for the developing countries was to learn how to become industrialized without creating cultural disequilibrium, since the transfer of foreign technology was naturally accompanied by new values, attitudes and ways of living. Instead of relying totally on imported industrial means, they should develop tools and means of their own which would be suited to the environment and temperament of their people. Developed nations, believing that industrialization in itself would solve all problems, had lost their traditional values and beliefs and then had suddenly become aware of the disastrous side effects of technological progress: the deterioration of the human environment; unemployment and underemployment resulting from mechanization and automation; and the creation of ever more sophisticated weapons for the destruction of human life and of mechanical instruments which invaded people's privacy. All those developments were contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In order to avert those consequences, national and international studies should be pursued and, at the same time, all nations should strive for real co-operation and an exchange of knowledge and experience. The vaunted interdependence between the countries of the world had ironically been only a one-way street, making the developing nations more and more dependent on advanced nations and preventing them from developing their own scientific and technical infrastructure. The international division of labour had always been to the advantage of the developed countries and co-operation between nations was still far from being fair. The world community should begin to put forth practical suggestions and try to devise measures which would improve conditions; it should focus on the major problems and deal with the sickness rather than with the symptoms.

44. In its rapid progress toward industrialization, Iran was confronted with some of the consequences which the world was trying to avoid. Her delegation therefore felt that it was essential to study carefully the norms that could guide different States and the measures they should take in accordance with their particular conditions to avoid as far as possible the adverse effects of scientific and technological developments on human rights. It believed that the elaboration of a declaration on the subject should be studied carefully, and that it should be adopted by consensus so that there would be a minimum guarantee of the successful implementation of its provisions. It favoured the suggestion made by the French representative at the preceding meeting that the item should be further studied during the thirty-first session of the General Assembly, particularly in view of the fact that it was currently under consideration by the Commission on Human Rights.

45. Mr. VON KYAW (Federal Republic of Germany) said that scientific and technological developments clearly opened up new perspectives for improving the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms; at the same time, however, abuse of new technological means to the detriment of human rights and freedoms was a frightening possibility. It was essential to define precise standards and guidelines in the fields covered by the reports of the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies which would

<sup>2</sup> See *Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.XIV.2), p. 3.

help Governments in initiating legislative action. It was unfortunate that the Commission on Human Rights had not so far been able to consider fully the ample material which had been submitted to it. In the consideration of the subject, a reasonable balance would have to be established between the promotion and protection of civil and political rights on the one hand and of social and economic rights on the other. Scientific and technological achievements should be aimed at improving the material welfare of man. The Federal Republic of Germany had chosen to be a social State and it had introduced an ever-increasing number of legal enactments designed to ensure that every citizen had a just share of the national income and to protect human dignity against any encroachments whatsoever. Legislation against environmental threats had also been greatly intensified in recent years. The Committee should bear in mind the basic orientation of its work as indicated in General Assembly resolution 2450 (XXIII) and resolution 10 (XXVII)<sup>1</sup> of the Commission on Human Rights. In that connexion, his Government attached considerable importance to the need for providing effective safeguards against any abuse of data concerning the individual which State agencies might rightfully collect but which should be used only for certain specific purposes.

46. It was necessary to make a serious effort to evaluate the material provided in the studies prepared by the Secretariat and the specialized agencies on various aspects of the subject under discussion (see A/10162) and to draw conclusions from the material, especially as most of the studies contained concrete proposals for further action. It would be premature to adopt a draft declaration such as that contained in document A/C.3/L.2144 because it did not take into account the conclusions yet to be drawn from the various studies on the subject.

47. Mrs. OGATA (Japan) said that, as the studies prepared by the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies amply demonstrated, scientific and technological development posed an unprecedented threat to human rights. The problem was not merely that of job replacement or industrial hazards, which had existed ever since the industrial revolution; there was a qualitative difference between the dangers which science and technology had posed in the past and those they posed today. Human rights needed to

be examined in the light of contemporary development; in the areas of biology, medicine and biochemistry there was an urgent need to devise standards for preserving human rights, and the Secretary-General's report (A/10146) raised many questions with deep social implications connected with the use of electronic systems. The increasing use of computers in particular was a threat to civil and political rights and to the principle of democracy itself.

48. The problems involved in scientific and technological developments were not limited to the industrially developed countries; at a time when the developing nations were achieving in a matter of decades what the older industrialized countries had attained over a period of centuries, the risk of sacrificing human rights and happiness to science and technology would sooner or later confront all countries. Japan's own experience showed that human rights and well-being could not be neglected during a period of rapid development. Her delegation believed that consideration of the effects of the development of science and technology on human rights should not be confined to individuals; as the draft declaration duly recognized, scientific and technological achievements had produced weapons of mass destruction whose dangerous effects were recognized by everyone, and had given rise to a compelling need for greater international co-operation, an objective which her delegation strongly supported. Her delegation considered, however, that a balance had to be reached in the draft declaration between the dangers to national rights and the dangers to individual rights. The draft declaration should not be addressed only to Governments, but should reach the widest circles of scientists and technicians, who were in many cases themselves greatly concerned about the consequences of their accomplishments. Careful standards must be drawn up which would guide the behaviour of scientists and technicians as well as Government officials and legislators. Because of the importance of the draft declaration, her delegation considered that it should be referred to working groups, and it also supported the suggestion of the French representative that the item should be included as a matter of priority on the agenda of the thirty-first session of the General Assembly.

*The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.*

## 2138th meeting

Wednesday, 22 October 1975, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

A/C.3/SR.2138

### AGENDA ITEM 69

**Human rights and scientific and technological developments: reports of the Secretary-General (*continued*)**  
(A/10146, A/10162, A/10226 and Add.1 and 2, A/C.3/L.2144, 2146-2148, 2160-2162)

1. Miss MELČICKÁ (Czechoslovakia) said that at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly a group of countries, including Czechoslovakia, had submitted a draft declaration on the use of scientific and technological progress in the interests of peace and for the benefit of mankind (A/C.3/L.2144). The document had aroused great