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THIRD COMMITTEE
53rd meeting
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UN/LA COLLECTION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 53rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 84: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE (continued) (A/37/3 (Part I), A/37/392, A/37/542)

AGENDA ITEM 85: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/330 and Add.1)

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- (a) REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (continued) (A/37/40)
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AGENDA ITEM 88: TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT (continued) (A/37/3 (Part I), A/37/551)

- (a) UNILATERAL DECLARATIONS BY MEMBER STATES AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/263)
- (b) DRAFT CODE OF MEDICAL ETHICS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/264 and Add.1 and 2)

1. Mrs. YAMAZAKI (Japan), speaking on agenda item 87, said that it was gratifying to see that the number of States parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights continued to increase year by year, and her delegation hoped that even more States would ratify or accede to those Covenants in the future. While the Universal Declaration on Human Rights had long been regarded as an important international instrument, it did not constitute a legal document; thus, it was important for States to accept the International Covenants because they were legally binding.

2. While her delegation was gratified to note the continued improvement in the system for implementing the Covenants, it was concerned by the delays in the

(Mrs. Yamazaki, Japan)

submission by States parties of reports to the Human Rights Committee, which amounted to a failure on the part of those States to fulfil a solemn obligation; such a failure rendered the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights meaningless.

3. Her delegation considered Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/33 to be a significant step forward in the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The extension of the term of office of the members of the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts would give continuity to the deliberations of that body, and the decision to elect members from among States parties to the Covenant, regardless of whether they were members of the Economic and Social Council, would facilitate the elections. The Council's decision that the duration of any session of the Working Group should be extended if required likewise constituted a step forward, although the time allotted for those sessions was still far from sufficient. As a recently elected member of the Group of Experts, Japan would do everything to promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant.

4. With regard to the elaboration of a second optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, her delegation commended the patience shown by those delegations that favoured the abolition of the death penalty towards those delegations which could not currently do so. However, her delegation also understood their concern about abuse of the death penalty and shared the hope that discussion of that issue would deter the international community from an excessive use of capital punishment and from mass executions. Her Government felt that the establishment of an international instrument on the matter would be inappropriate, since article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights already dealt with the subject. In Japan, the death penalty existed only for a very limited number of offences, with terms of imprisonment available as alternative penalties for most offences. Strict and long-established standards prevented the possibility of an arbitrary imposition of the death sentence by Japanese courts. Since the death penalty was viewed in Japan as an effective deterrent to particularly heinous crimes, her Government did not feel that it was desirable to abolish it at the current stage. Her delegation felt that arbitrary executions in certain countries should be prevented by means other than the abolition of the death penalty.

5. Ms. BOZHKOVA (Bulgaria), speaking on agenda items 87 and 85, said that her country attached great importance to the International Covenants on human rights and therefore noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of States which had ratified or acceded to the Covenants. However, her delegation regretted that the Covenants were far from being universally implemented and were accordingly not as effective as they should be. Some States parties had entered reservations on some articles, including that concerning the right of all peoples to self-determination, which was one of the most important in both Covenants.

6. As a party to both Covenants, her country had submitted a report to the Human Rights Committee in 1978 and two reports, in 1979 and 1981, to the Economic and Social Council's Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts, thereby

(Ms. Bozhkova, Bulgaria)

demonstrating once again that Bulgaria had provided guarantees for the effective enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms. Her country's experience clearly demonstrated the advantages of socialism in the realization of human rights. Her delegation appreciated the work done by the Human Rights Committee and the Working Group; the dialogue established by the Human Rights Committee with States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was especially constructive and should be pursued.

7. With regard to item 85, it was her delegation's view that scientific and technological progress was one of the major achievements of modern times and should be used to accelerate the socio-economic development of all countries. The Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind represented a substantial step towards the promotion of international co-operation in the field of science and technology. The principles of the Declaration had been confirmed in General Assembly resolutions 35/130 A and 36/56 A, which provided guidelines for its more effective implementation and stressed the need for preserving international peace and security.

8. Nevertheless, every day brought forth evidence of the use of scientific and technological achievements for purposes detrimental to human rights. Her delegation was concerned by such misuse and was alarmed by the wasting of resources for weapons production. It was disconcerting to realize that military expenditures had reached the figure of \$1 million per minute at a time when the problems of feeding, educating and providing health care for much of the earth's population had become particularly acute. Discussion of agenda item 85 should therefore focus on ways and means to guarantee the right to life and should avoid issues of secondary importance. Resolution 1982/7 of the Commission on Human Rights was a model of the kind of action that was needed.

9. The threat of nuclear catastrophe intensified the need for international co-operation in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Declaration under discussion. The implementation of the Declaration would significantly strengthen international peace and security and promote international co-operation, and her delegation was willing to co-operate in the attainment of those essential objectives.

10. Mrs. de BRACHO (Venezuela) said that the observance of and respect for human rights had for many years been a focal point of her country's foreign policy. One of the most important steps taken by the international community to promote the observance of and respect for human rights throughout the world had been the adoption by the General Assembly of the International Covenants on human rights, to which her country had become party in 1978. She welcomed recent ratifications of or accessions to the Covenants by other States and urged those that had not yet ratified or acceded to them to do so in the near future. Her country was also party to the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, which embraced the observance both of civil and political and of economic, social and cultural rights. Her delegation attached great importance to the work that might be done to that end at the regional level.

(Mrs. de Bracho, Venezuela)

11. Her delegation was especially gratified by the drawing up of a second optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, since her country was known for its defence of human rights, especially the right to life, and its opposition to the death penalty. Article 58 of the Venezuelan Constitution stated, "The right to life is inviolable. No law may establish a death penalty and no authority may apply it".

12. Her delegation also favoured the drafting of a convention on the rights of the Child. The National Congress had recently adopted an Act reforming the Civil Code; among the most important provisions of the reform were those relating to the protection of minors. For example, all children, whether or not born in wedlock, were recognized under the Act as being equal. Another major issue addressed by the Act was the recognition of the parental authority of both parents; it also provided that parents could be deprived of their authority if they subjected their children to specified types of ill-treatment. Venezuela had taken such action on behalf of its children because it was committed to their physical, moral and spiritual well-being.

13. With regard to agenda item 88, her delegation appealed for all torture and inhuman treatment to be brought to an end; such practices degraded the integrity of human beings and were incompatible with the respect for fundamental human rights. Article 3 of the chapter of the Venezuelan Constitution that dealt with individual rights stated that "no one may be held incommunicado or be subjected to torture or other measures causing physical or moral suffering to a person deprived of his liberty".

14. In conclusion, she expressed the hope that all the efforts being made by international, regional and national authorities with regard to the observance of human rights would bear fruit.

15. Mr. COORAY (Sri Lanka) emphasized the important role of the Human Rights Committee in the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to that Covenant. His country had acceded to the two International Covenants on 11 June 1980 and had made the declaration provided for in article 41 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Although, in response to the General Assembly's appeal, more Member States had acceded to the Covenants, the number was still less than half of the total membership of the United Nations.

16. His delegation had noted with great interest the report of the Human Rights Committee (A/37/40) and the Committee's decision, reproduced in Annex IV, on the periodicity of reports, which encouraged States Parties to submit supplementary reports following the consideration of their previous reports. His delegation also noted with appreciation the fact that the Committee was continually striving towards uniform standards in the implementation of the provisions of the Covenant. For the first time a session of the Committee had been held outside the United Nations; by conducting its proceedings in a State party, the Committee had gained valuable experience. On the question of the publication of the Human Rights Committee's documentation, his delegation concurred with its Chairman's preference for issuing the Committee's public documents annually in two bound volumes.

(Mr. Cooray, Sri Lanka)

17. With reference to agenda item 85, his delegation attached great importance to the implementation of the provisions and principles of the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind and it welcomed the studies being carried out within the United Nations and by the specialized agencies on the national and international machinery needed to ensure that the effects of new scientific and technological developments were not detrimental to human rights. Scientific and technological progress should be directed and developed in such a way as to serve human needs and further national and international social justice. At the international level, there was an urgent need for a global strategy reflecting world-wide economic and social needs and directed towards securing access for developing countries to modern scientific and technological developments in the industrialized countries, promoting the transfer and equitable sharing of such technology and creating suitable indigenous forms of technology for the benefit of developing countries all of which would be important elements of a new and more just international economic order. Such fruitful international co-operation, indeed, was one of the purposes of the United Nations.

18. With regard to agenda item 84, his delegation had welcomed the decision of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to give consideration at its forthcoming session to updating the study on discrimination in the matter of religious rights and practices. He felt compelled to report to the Committee that his Government had been disturbed on several occasions by publications in some foreign media in which pictures of founders of religions in particular Lord Buddha, had been used in commercial advertising. His country's Constitution, adopted in 1978, embodied the right of every person to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to have or to adopt the religion or belief of his or her choice. The exercise of that right could not be restricted in any circumstances and, in the case of an infringement, a person was entitled to apply for redress to the Supreme Court or, more informally, to the Parliamentary Commissioner or Ombudsman.

19. With reference to agenda item 86, his delegation had noted with satisfaction the further progress made by the Commission on Human Rights in the preparation of the draft Convention on the Rights of the Child and looked forward to its early completion. While adhering to the provisions of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, his country had also taken steps to draw up a Children's Charter.

20. In connection with agenda item 88, his Government, had made the unilateral declaration against torture called for by General Assembly resolution 32/64, as was reported in document A/37/263. It had pointed out that article 11 of the Constitution enshrined the fundamental right not to be subjected to any such treatment; that right could not be restricted in any circumstances, and any person was entitled to apply to the Supreme Court or to the Ombudsman in the event of an infringement.

21. Although such declarations regarding human rights were of considerable value, they were not sufficient in themselves; what was needed above all was the popular

(Mr. Cooray, Sri Lanka)

will to make human rights really effective in practice. Human rights education could play a considerable role in creating that popular will and, as the International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1978, had emphasized in its Final Document, such education should aim at fostering attitudes of tolerance, respect and solidarity, providing knowledge about human rights and developing the individual's awareness of the ways by which human rights could be translated into social and political reality. In recent years, the Sri Lanka Foundation, through its Human Rights Centre, had been engaged in an intensive programme relating to the teaching of human rights in schools. Among the seminars held by the Centre had been one on the place of human rights in the different religious perspectives prevailing in his country. The Centre had helped the people of his country to discover many common elements, such as the concepts of "Dharma" - the sense of fairness or justice - and "Ahimsa" - peace and non-violence - which also formed the basis of all human rights, the recognition of which was the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

22. Mr. HEGYI (Hungary) emphasized the importance of scientific and technological progress in accelerating social and economic development in all countries, provided that such progress was used for the benefit of peoples and individuals. As the Proclamation of Teheran of 1968 had pointed out, there was an organic relationship between scientific and technological developments, and the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms; there were dangers for human rights inherent in such developments, while at the same time they had unquestionable advantages in terms of development. In the contemporary international situation, however, new advances in science and technology did not automatically lead to changes for the better; there was ample proof, especially in the field of weaponry, that science and technology could be and had been used against the interests of humanity. It would therefore be useful to reach decisions aimed at curbing the arms race and preventing the introduction of new weapons systems; resolution 1982/7 of the Commission on Human Rights pointed in that direction.

23. At the same time, scientific and technological progress had opened up vast opportunities for human development that should be explored in harmony with the principles of the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, the intention of which was to make the achievements of modern science and technology accessible to the developing countries. That necessity was also underlined by paragraph 5 of the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind.

24. The existence of social ills such as unemployment, inequality and discrimination was also incompatible with the provisions of that Declaration, to which his Government and people attached the utmost importance. While his country was not free from economic problems, the right to work was embodied in its Constitution, and unemployment and the resultant humiliating struggle for subsistence had been unknown for more than 30 years. That remarkable achievement and the country's standard of living were attributable entirely to the socialist system.

(Mr. Hegyi, Hungary)

25. The International Covenants on human rights provided an appropriate framework for co-operation among States in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter. Their effectiveness depended on their universality and on strict compliance by signatories with their obligations. While his delegation was pleased to note the increase, reported in document A/37/406, in the number of States which had ratified or acceded to the Covenants, it was deplorable that after more than 15 years over half of the States Members of the United Nations were still not parties. It was strange that certain States which were otherwise such eloquent champions of human rights all over the world had not yet ratified either instrument.

26. Continuing co-operation among States within the framework of the Covenants would be possible only if the policy of confrontation and preparation for war was ended. In its general comments in document A/37/40, which deserved thorough study, the Human Rights Committee pointed out that States had the supreme duty to prevent wars; that was the most important condition for safeguarding the right to life. Those comments were very pertinent at a time when some Governments were propagating plans for nuclear war and trying to gain the support of their people for the deployment of new systems of weapons of mass destruction.

27. His Government was gratified by the fact that the Human Rights Committee had so far been able to carry out its mandate in such a way as to develop useful co-operation with the majority of States parties without becoming a tool of propaganda campaigns. His Government attached the utmost importance to the two Covenants and always submitted its reports to the Human Rights Committee on time. It had been among the first to become a Party to the two Covenants, and their principles had not only been embodied in Hungarian legislation prior to their entry into force but were also applied in practice, as was borne out by his Government's latest report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. His delegation earnestly hoped that the application of the principles of both those instruments would soon become truly universal.

28. As to agenda item 86, it was high time that the draft Convention on the Rights of the Child was completed; the General Assembly should instruct the Commission on Human Rights to finalize that important document at the following session. His delegation therefore fully supported draft resolution A/C.3/37/L.46, submitted by the delegation of Poland, and trusted that it reflected the intent of the international community.

29. Mr. BHANDARA (Pakistan) said that the majority of the people in Pakistan were Muslims. It was estimated that Minorities belonging to religions other than Islam constituted about 3.25 per cent of the total population. Pakistan adhered to a policy of religious tolerance and all individuals had the freedom to profess their religion or belief and to establish, maintain and manage their religious institutions. No person attending any educational institution was required to receive religious instruction or attend religious worship if such instruction or worship related to a religion other than his own. The Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed sufficient protection and safeguards to every citizen, irrespective of

(Mr. Bhandara, Pakistan)

his caste, creed or religion. In addition, the Government of Pakistan had established a full-fledged Minorities Affairs Wing in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Minorities Affairs to safeguard the constitutional rights of minorities, promote their welfare and give them a sense of being full and equal citizens of the State.

30. Pakistan wished to reiterate its belief that scientific and technological developments should be placed at the service of mankind so as to promote the economic, social, cultural and moral advancement of the human race, realize the full potential of man and enhance the enjoyment of human rights by individuals. The rights of individuals could be safeguarded and their enjoyment enhanced only through determined and concerted action by the international community to redress existing injustices and meet evolving challenges. His delegation hoped that the international community could ignore transitory considerations and adopt a far-sighted and comprehensive approach. Increased international co-operation aimed at establishing a just, stable and progressive world order was a prerequisite for success in that respect. The increased capabilities made possible by scientific and technological developments would not result in the effective promotion of human rights throughout the world unless they were used for the welfare and progress of mankind as a whole.

31. In accordance with the injunctions of Islam, the laws of Pakistan and its national development plans focused attention on the promotion of the well-being and development of children. Increased attention was being paid by the Government to the provision of health, educational and other essential facilities for children in Pakistan. Special priority in the provision of those services had been accorded to children in rural areas, disabled children, female children, children in urban slums and children of low-income groups. Any shortcomings with respect to meeting Pakistan's responsibilities towards children were due to a scarcity of resources rather than to a lack of effort. His delegation fully appreciated the useful work being done by the open-ended working group of the Commission on Human Rights in elaborating a draft convention on the rights of the child.

32. At an earlier meeting of the Committee, his delegation had expressed the view that in evaluating the human rights situation in a country, it was advisable to adopt a cautious approach rather than rushing to pass hasty judgements which might not always be based on verified facts and which might not take into account adequately the totality of the situation in the country concerned. The interpretation of human rights and the priorities attached to them varied from country to country depending on the nature of the socio-political system, the level of development, social and cultural traditions and customs, and so on. Those factors made it extremely difficult to arrive at an objective evaluation of the human rights situation in a country, especially when the would-be evaluators were not well-acquainted with the details of various facets of its national life. His delegation therefore reiterated the hope that in considering the human rights question, delegations would avoid passing hasty judgements and adopt a more cautious approach.

33. Mr. ROELS (Netherlands) said that his delegation welcomed the Economic and Social Council's request that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities establish a sessional working group to study the body of guidelines, principles and guarantees for the protection of persons detained on grounds of mental ill-health or suffering from mental disorder, prepared by the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission. His Government hoped that the working group would also pay due attention to the procedures for determining whether adequate reasons existed for detaining persons on the grounds just mentioned. That aspect was all the more relevant since dissent was currently construed in some countries as being mental illness and persons who expressed their opinions were put in psychiatric institutions in order to be "cured".

34. He wished to draw attention to the final report of Mr. Bouhdiba, Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission, on the exploitation of child labour. Although United Nations bodies had stimulated greater awareness of the situation, there was every indication that child labour was increasing. There was a need for further action, and the international community should not only strengthen legal norms for the protection of the rights of the child but also take effective steps to improve the lot of tens of millions of children who were subjected to servitude and exploitation, including repugnant practices of child prostitution and other forms of sexual and moral abuse.

35. His delegation hoped that the open-ended Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights on the drafting of a convention against torture would be able to conclude its work on the draft in 1983. The Netherlands would do everything in its power to contribute to a successful outcome.

36. His delegation attached great importance to the fact that the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief had become a universal document, together with the relevant provisions of other international instruments relating to the fight against religious intolerance. There were, however, still too many people suffering from religious intolerance and, accordingly, there should be a follow-up to the Declaration in the form of effective implementation and a continuing review of its provisions.

37. One of the most cruel and inhuman forms of religious intolerance currently being practised was the systematic persecution of the Baha'is in Iran, which was unprecedented in scale. That religious faith had been formally outlawed by the current régime, a step which was at variance with the Declaration. In addition, practices of discrimination and intolerance formally dictated or at least encouraged by the State or State organs existed in several countries. In that context, his delegation wished to recall that in North Korea, for instance, neither Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism nor any other religion or belief based on free choice had survived the repressive policy pursued by the Government during the past two decades. In Viet Nam, the Unified Buddhist Church had been dissolved in November 1981. Churches were recognized only when they were prepared to serve the revolutionary Government. In Taiwan, the Presbyterian Church was persecuted and had been denied the right to participate in the World Council of Churches. Discrimination and intolerance based on religion, belief and non-religious

(Mr. Roels, Netherlands)

convictions were almost inherent in most of the Communist political and social systems such as the Soviet Union, Romania, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. Fortunately, in some Eastern European countries, churches were able to remain a strong element to which people turned for inspiration, encouragement and guidance to cope with daily life and were still able to perform their functions.

38. There was another form of intolerance or discrimination, caused by internal religious, ethnic or social factors, which was not perpetrated by the authorities and was, indeed, often practised against their will. In that case, the Declaration offered guidelines to individuals who themselves had important responsibilities towards each other for the enjoyment of the freedom of religion and belief. While the extreme forms of religious intolerance were still restricted to some countries, intolerance as a manifestation of internal factors was widespread and unfortunately occurred in different regions of the world. The Western countries certainly were not immune to such intolerance, recent actions against synagogues and Jewish life and property were a source of deep concern to his delegation. The Declaration was an indispensable instrument for the preservation of existing multi-religious societies and for the guidance of States that were in the process of becoming multi-ethnic, and hence multi-religious, societies.

39. Mr. AL-SAYAGHI (Yemen), referring to the question on a convention on the rights of the child, said that childhood was not only the most important stage in the formation of a human being but the background against which the psychological and social features of the individual and of society as a whole emerged and were given shape. Consequently, concern for the care of children was the real guarantee of a society which was alert and tolerant, in which love and brotherhood reigned and which was free of social and psychological ills. Provision for all of the physical, mental, ethical and social needs of the child, his protection and the inculcation of a sense of security and well-being, all contributed to the creation of societies in which harmony, peace and love prevailed.

40. Many countries had made great progress in ensuring conditions in which their children could live happily removed from any undesirable intrusions into their lives, but such achievements would remain fragmentary as long as millions of children in many countries of the world were still living in difficult conditions through no fault of their own. The problems and complexities confronting children in the contemporary world were numerous and should be approached in a spirit of solidarity. A global rather than a regional perspective should prevail, since the latter approach did not contribute to the finding of solutions of a universal character from which all countries and in particular the developing countries could profit.

41. His country had endeavored to create suitable conditions in which children might live a better life and had extended free education to include all levels. It had established a number of specialized hospitals and centres for children which offered their services free of charge, and had established many social centres. Since the family was the original and basic environment in which the child was brought up and absorbed principles and ideals, the State had set up nursery schools which were free of charge. For handicapped and needy children and for orphans the

(Mr. Al-Sayaghi, Yemen)

State had established social welfare, vocational and educational centres where they were provided with instruction, food, clothing and shelter. For delinquent children the State had set up social guidance centres which performed educational and reformatory functions at the same time. His Government was, naturally, not satisfied with what it had done thus far but a beginning had been made and it was hoped that greater achievements would follow.

42. The General Assembly, in adopting the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in its resolution 1386 (XIV), had recognized, as stated in the preamble, that mankind owed to the child the best it had to give. The Declaration had stipulated that the child should enjoy special protection and should be given opportunities and facilities to enable him to develop in conditions of freedom and dignity. It had stated that the child had the right to a name and a nationality, that he should enjoy the benefits of social security including the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services, that he was entitled to receive education and that he should be among the first to receive protection and relief. He should be protected from all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation and from practices which might foster any form of discrimination and should be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood.

43. While the Declaration described what the situation should be, examination of the situation of children in many parts of the world revealed that millions of children suffered from hunger, disease, homelessness and death as a result of wars, colonialism or occupation. The children of the occupied Arab territories were deprived of the most elementary human rights and were exposed to death and maltreatment at the hands of the barbarous Zionist troops. The recent acts of the Israeli authorities in the Sabra and Shatila camps confirmed the barbarity and savagery of the Zionist entity; thousands of children had been killed and others wounded, and large numbers had died from lack of medical attention. Israel had not been content with that but had also adopted repressive policies regarding the education of older children in the occupied Arab territories. Children were often compelled to leave school in order to supplement family income because of the loss or absence of parents, the separation of families and the high inflation rate. The occupation authorities had placed severe restrictions on the acquisition of knowledge relating to the history and culture of Palestine and had deleted passages from textbooks referring to Palestine, love for the homeland and Palestinian nationalism. Atlases, books and maps bearing the name of Palestine had been replaced by others.

44. His country hoped that all countries that had achieved a measure of affluence and progress would assume their responsibilities towards children in many regions of the world.

45. Mr. FREYBERG (Poland), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that at an earlier meeting, the representative of the United States, speaking on agenda item 84, had mentioned Poland and had presented the story of the Flower Cross as an example of a policy of intolerance based on religion. It was not worth while

(Mr. Freyberg, Poland)

replying to those remarks because members of the Committee were well aware of the situation of State/Church relations in Poland. With respect to the Flower Cross, the representative of the United States had forgotten to add that the authorities in Poland intervened very rarely and did so only when people sought to use the acts of worshippers for purposes that were clearly not religious. The interpretation given by the representative of the United States was false and distorted. The Flower Cross was a peaceful symbol established on the spot where the monument to the late Cardinal Wyszynski was soon to be erected. No one bothered the people who went there to lay flowers and to pray. The only possible source of the United States information must have been the notorious agencies which specialized in distortions.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.