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THIRD COMMITTEE  
49th meeting  
held on  
Monday, 21 November 1983  
at 3.30 p.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 49th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CHAVANAVIRAJ (Thailand)

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25 November 1983

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 93: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE (A/38/3 (part I), A/C.3/38/8)

AGENDA ITEM 94: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS (A/38/3 (part I), A/38/195 and A/38/325)

AGENDA ITEM 95: QUESTION OF A CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (A/38/3 (part I))

AGENDA ITEM 96: INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS (A/38/3 (part I), A/38/88, A/38/203, and A/38/529)

(a) REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (A/38/40)

(b) STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/38/392)

AGENDA ITEM 97: TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT (A/38/3 (part I))

1. Mr. HERNDL (Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Human Rights), introducing item 93, noted that since the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief, human rights organs, including the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, had regularly considered the question of its implementation and had continued to examine matters relating to the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance. At its most recent meeting the Sub-Commission had decided to appoint a special rapporteur to undertake the study of the current dimensions of the problem requested by the Commission in its resolution 1983/40. The Commission had requested the Secretary-General to hold a seminar in 1984-1985, within the framework of the advisory services programme, on the encouragement of understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief. Preparations for the seminar had begun and it was hoped that it would be held some time during the coming year.

2. With respect to item 94, many United Nations resolutions had been adopted and substantive work had been carried out within the United Nations and the specialized agencies. In that connection, the General Assembly had adopted resolutions 37/188 and 37/189 and the Commission on Human Rights had adopted resolutions 1983/41, 1983/42 and 1983/43. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had adopted resolution 1983/39 by which it recommended to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Human Rights, that the report of the Special Rapporteur on principles, guidelines and guarantees for the

(Mr. Herndl)

protection of persons detained on grounds of mental ill-health or suffering from mental disorder should be published and given the widest possible distribution.

3. With respect to item 95, the Commission on Human Rights had for some years been giving attention to a draft convention on the rights of the child with a view to strengthening legal norms protecting those rights. At its thirty-ninth session the Commission had once again appointed an open-ended working group to discuss the draft convention, and it had so far considered and drawn up the preamble and texts for articles 1 to 12. The Commission had decided to continue work on the draft Convention at its next session in 1984 as a matter of highest priority with a view to completing the text at that time, and the Economic and Social Council had again authorized a meeting of an open-ended working group of the Commission for a period of one week prior to the session in order to facilitate the Commission's task.

4. Turning to the International Covenants on Human Rights, he said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/38/392) showed what was the status of the Covenants as of 1 September 1983. The increasing number of States parties to the Covenants, which represented different economic, social and legal systems, demonstrated the need for efficient and dynamic implementation procedures able to test the consistency of the measures and policies adopted at the national level with international standards in the field of human rights. The constructive dialogue established by the supervisory bodies with the Governments of States parties had been most useful and held significant promise for the future.

5. With respect to the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts had submitted a report to the Economic and Social Council in which it made suggestions and recommendations concerning issues arising from the consideration of reports of States parties. The Council took note of the Group's report in its resolution 1983/41 and requested the Group to consider including in its future reports brief summaries of the consideration of each country report. As to the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the seventh annual report of the Human Rights Committee was before the Third Committee in document A/38/40. In 1983 the Human Rights Committee had begun to examine in detail the views expressed by the representatives of Member States in the Third Committee with regard to its annual report. In that connection, he wished to draw attention to a decision adopted by the Human Rights Committee at its eighteenth session by which it had recommended the inclusion of Arabic among its official and working languages and had requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate steps to that end. The text of that recommendation was contained in annex V to the Committee's report. It would require express endorsement by the General Assembly before it could be implemented, since it would give rise to considerable financial implications. He also wished to draw attention to the fact that some Arab States at meetings of the States parties to the Covenant had requested that services should be provided in Arabic at meetings of the States parties. Currently, both the Human Rights Committee and the meetings of States parties were serviced in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

(Mr. Herndl)

6. Information on the activities of the Human Rights Committee at its twentieth session would be included in its next report to the General Assembly.
7. With regard to item 97, he said that the Commission on Human Rights had been engaged in drafting a convention against torture. In 1982, the General Assembly had requested the Commission to complete the drafting of the convention as a matter of the highest priority with a view to submitting a draft, including provisions for effective implementation, to the General Assembly at the current session. The work done by the Commission in that regard was described in chapter VIII of the report on its thirty-ninth session (E/1982/13 and Add.1).
8. Mr. OGURTSOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation wished to know what were the criteria used by the Centre for Human Rights in preparing its reports. Some reports reproduced the entire text of replies from some States, no matter how lengthy. Yet replies of other States, already quite brief, were further reduced in the summaries in the reports. He wished to know why the Centre did not apply uniform criteria.
9. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat had taken note of the remarks made by the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and a reply would be made in due course.
10. Mr. FURSLAND (United Kingdom) said that the International Covenants on Human Rights, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, constituted the foundation of international human rights standards. Yet only about half the Member States had ratified them; the United Kingdom urged the rest to do so in the near future. Ratification alone, however, was not enough but must be followed up by implementation by the States Parties and monitored by the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Committee.
11. The latter dealt expertly, sympathetically and objectively with the national reports, and its own general comments on the Covenant were a major contribution to international standard-setting. Most States Parties had responded commendably by duly submitting their reports, and had helped the Committee by sending experts to represent them. Regrettably, a few States Parties had damaged the Committee's credibility and effectiveness by not fulfilling their reporting obligations; it was to be hoped that those States would submit their reports soon.
12. His delegation shared the view of that Committee's Chairman (CCPR/C/SR.435) that the United Nations was not giving the Committee's work the publicity it deserved. It urged the Secretariat to review its current arrangements with a view to providing the Committee with better publicity and services, and to give urgent attention to increasing the Committee members' honoraria; otherwise the Committee would cease to attract candidates of the highest calibre and the quality of its work would decline. He welcomed the Secretariat's arrangements for Committee members' medical insurance, at least as an interim measure.

(Mr. Fursland, United Kingdom)

13. At its 414th meeting the Committee had expressed its satisfaction at the Assembly's support, reflected in resolution 37/191, for the publication in bound volumes of the Committee's official records. His delegation was pleased to know that the Secretariat had begun that task, because the second round of reporting pursuant to the Covenant, due to begin shortly, would increase the need for a full set of bound volumes of the official records of the first round.
14. It had been suggested that the Committee's reports should in future be submitted to the Council at its spring session rather than direct to the Assembly; however, if that suggestion were followed the reports would be out of date before the Assembly saw them. Moreover, the dialogue between the Committee and the Assembly was valuable. His delegation endorsed the Committee's clear opposition, stated in chapter V of its report (A/38/40), to any change in its reporting procedures.
15. The Council's work on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had been much less satisfactory; the Sessional Working Group of Government Experts lacked the standing and effectiveness of the Human Rights Committee and, as could be seen from document A/38/392, could not even attract enough candidates to fill its vacancies. The fault lay with the system, not the Committee. Council resolution 1982/33 had led to some improvement, which, it was hoped, could be further advanced when the Council next deliberated the matter in 1985.
16. Speaking on item 94, he said that scientific and technological developments had brought both immense good and immense harm to humanity, the latter from the development of increasingly awesome weapons of destruction which not only threatened the lives of human beings everywhere but also absorbed resources that could be deployed for more useful purposes, such as economic and social development. His delegation was as concerned as any at the dangers and the waste involved, for in the past few decades the United Kingdom had suffered more than most from wars initiated by others. However, the Third Committee's concern was with human rights, and in that context with the right to life in particular. That universal, non-partisan concern should be the basis for the Committee's approach. Unfortunately, negotiations had failed to produce agreement on the text on human rights and scientific and technological developments introduced the previous year in resolution 37/189 A, and it had been adopted by vote. He expressed the hope that a balanced text could be adopted by consensus at the current session.
17. Scientific and technological developments also threatened the rights to liberty and security of person. One example was the abuse of psychiatry through the detention and mistreatment of persons in mental institutions because of their political views or on other non-medical grounds. Regrettably, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had been unable to reach agreement on the practical proposals submitted by its Rapporteur in the form of a draft body of guidelines, principles and guarantees. The Rapporteur's report demonstrated the seriousness of human rights violations in that field and the urgent need for international action. Persons suffering, or alleged to be

(Mr. Fursland, United Kingdom)

suffering, from mental disorder or weakness were particularly vulnerable. They were often unable to protect themselves against their supposed protectors, the officers of the State. His delegation was therefore concerned at the delays in the Sub-Commission's work on the Rapporteur's proposals.

18. Of course, scientific and technological developments had also brought enormous benefits to people in all societies, to which the Commission on Human Rights had also paid attention. At its most recent session it had adopted two relevant resolutions (1983/41 and 1983/42) and at its next session it would have before it the Sub-Commission's useful report on data provision and protection (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1983/18). Those three initiatives were related to the same general theme - the human rights benefits of scientific and technological developments - and they should be dealt with in a concerted way. He expressed the hope that the Commission at its next session would adopt one consensus resolution which would take account of all those elements.

19. Referring to item 93 and to the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, he said that the adoption of declarations did not in itself solve problems; conscientious follow-up action, in particular by Governments, was needed. Discrimination and intolerance based on religion were to be found deep in the cultural history of the human race, and Governments should work to eliminate them from people's hearts and minds. It was therefore deeply distressing when certain Governments - representing both avowedly religious and avowedly non-religious ideologies - did exactly the opposite by encouraging intolerance among their people towards certain religious groups or by themselves discriminating against such groups. The persistence of such abuses strengthened the case for a renewed international commitment to eliminate all forms of intolerance based on religion or belief, along the lines of the Declaration adopted in 1961. His delegation welcomed the action taken by the Commission on Human Rights at its previous session, which needed to be carried forward at future sessions of the Commission and its Sub-Commission as well as in the Third Committee.

20. Mr. BYKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on item 94, said that the colossal strides made in science and technology were one of the most important factors in mankind's progress. They had opened up unlimited prospects in many fields, such as the development of new sources of energy, the conquest of space, conservation of the environment and the forecasting and prevention of natural disasters. They had also contributed greatly to the fight against hunger, disease and economic backwardness. The importance of science and technology was reflected in the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 3384 (XXX), and in other United Nations human rights instruments.

21. Unfortunately, scientific and technological advances were being used not only for the benefit of mankind but also for purposes of destruction. The arms race, which was impelling the world towards a nuclear catastrophe, had reached a stage where the international community was living in danger of instant annihilation.

(Mr. Bykov, USSR)

The arsenals of the nuclear Powers now contained some 50,000 nuclear warheads whose total destructive power was roughly 1 million times that which had destroyed Hiroshima, or 3.5 tons for every person on earth. If that force was ever unleashed, the survival of civilization would be in doubt. The situation was being aggravated by the fact that the United States and other NATO Powers were continuing to increase their stocks of weapons and to expend vast sums on armaments programmes. Those Powers also sought constantly to devise new forms of weapons, thus threatening the strategic balance and preventing any real limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons, while going ahead with plans to deploy nuclear missiles ever nearer the frontiers of the Soviet Union and its neighbours.

22. The conduct of international affairs was being disrupted by the imperialists' constant efforts to achieve domination, in disregard of other States' interests. Their plans included the development of all types of weapons - nuclear, chemical and conventional - and even embraced concepts such as "first nuclear strike" and "limited nuclear war" - as if anyone could possibly emerge victorious from a nuclear conflict. A further terrifying aspect was that a nuclear catastrophe could be precipitated by accident or error; there had been a number of cases of computer malfunctions in United States aircraft carrying nuclear payloads.

23. The Soviet Union had denounced the concept of nuclear warfare as both criminal and senseless. Nuclear armament could and should be abolished. There was no alternative to the gradual reduction and elimination of the nuclear threat. Since the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union had been speaking out constantly against nuclear arms and proposing the adoption of a suitable international instrument banning such weapons for all time.

24. The countries of the Socialist community, including the Soviet Union, were continuing to do everything in their power to direct international affairs towards a saner course. Their concern for peace was reflected in the Programme of Peace for the 1980s, adopted at the Twenty-Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and in many other Soviet proposals and measures. The Soviet Union had undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; it called on all other nuclear Powers to make the same commitment. Furthermore, the Socialist States had proposed the signing of an agreement on the non-use of military force and the maintenance of peaceful relations between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO States.

25. The world's peoples had the right to expect their Governments, parliaments and international organizations, chiefly the United Nations, to seek political decisions aimed at preserving peace. Nations everywhere were rightly proclaiming their desire to live in peace, without constant fear for the future. The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, addressing the Third International Congress of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, had stressed that the foremost task of the world's leaders should be not to seek nuclear supremacy but to focus on the political will required to prevent a catastrophe, and that the Soviet Union stood ready to take radical decisions to that end and to do everything in its power to reduce international tension and the

(Mr. Bykov, USSR)

arms race. The efforts of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries along these lines were widely supported by the world community. Responsibility for the failure to reduce international tension and slow down the arms race and for the threat to the progress already achieved, lay with the opposing Powers who continued to harbour illusions of military supremacy.

26. His delegation had submitted to the General Assembly at its current session a draft declaration condemning nuclear warfare; such warfare must be decisively denounced as the most monstrous and criminal act against humanity. States Members of the United Nations must denounce as criminal acts the formulation and dissemination of doctrines based on the notions of "limited" or "permissible" use of nuclear weapons. The matter had particular significance because of the current efforts by imperialist forces to induce people to accept the idea of nuclear warfare and divert attention from the devastation which would be created by the use of warheads some 50 times more powerful than those which had destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

27. Nor should other types of weapons be overlooked. It was a terrifying fact that some of the weapons possessed by certain countries contained substances in quantities sufficient to kill several million people, and that programmes for the production of new types, including binary weapons, were still being pursued. Everything should be done to eliminate chemical weapons from the face of the earth.

28. The Soviet Union opposed the development, production and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, which did nothing to help solve mankind's problems, such as the economic development of States, protection of the environment and the satisfaction of people's basic needs, including food, health and education. In a world in which one person in three lacked the simplest medical services, one in five was illiterate, one in six undernourished, 60 million died of starvation every year and millions suffered from unemployment and inflation, the current annual expenditure of hundreds of billions of dollars for military purposes was senseless. The resources being diverted to serve such purposes should be used to promote mankind's social and economic development, particularly in the developing countries, which required help in overcoming the consequences of colonialism. Scientific and technological advances should be applied exclusively to the cause of peace, freedom and independence, not for aggressive purposes or to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States or with nations' economic and social development. The important decisions adopted by the United Nations on the use of scientific and technological advances for peace and the benefit of mankind must be given effect for the sake of world peace and the foremost human right - the right to life. The protection of that right should be the aim of every Government. Respect for human rights and the planning of nuclear warfare were incompatible. No differences in social structure or ideology must be allowed to override the fundamental need to maintain peace and prevent nuclear war. As the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had said, all nations must recognize the threat and unite in their efforts to protect their existence.



(Mr. Bykov, USSR)

29. The United Nations most important task was to maintain world peace and defend the right to life of all peoples. In view of the current tensions, every effort must be made to achieve real progress in nuclear disarmament, remove the threat of war and safeguard the right to life. All United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, the Third Committee and others involved in human rights questions, must concentrate their efforts on the attainment of that goal.

30. Mr. FRAMBACH (German Democratic Republic), speaking on item 96, said that his delegation warmly welcomed the trend towards a further increase in the number of States which had become parties to the Human Rights Covenants but that it could not overlook the fact that a large number of States still had not done so. Among them were States which persistently invoked human rights and even resorted to aggression, intervention and economic blackmail in an effort to impose their own concept of human rights on other peoples.

31. The report of the Human Rights Committee (A/38/40) reflected the Committee's business-like approach and sense of continuity in the performance of its functions. Especially in a time of international tensions and conflicts, it was important to note that the Human Rights Committee had successfully withstood efforts aimed at turning it into a device for serving the purposes of short-lived propaganda manoeuvres harmful to the cause of advancing human rights. An important positive aspect of the Committee's work was that Member States could rely on it as a forum which had come to play an essential role in their exchange of information, their mutual understanding and their co-operation with respect to the rights recognized in the Covenant. It was therefore regrettable that the number of States' reports considered in the period under review was only nine, which was a substantial decrease as compared with previous years and also fell considerably short of the average number of reports discussed in other comparable bodies. Moreover, the questions raised during the consideration of the reports took into account only to a limited extent the different civilizations and legal systems existing throughout the world. In particular, the questions posed in relation to the country reports referred to in the current report of the Human Rights Committee would appear to indicate that little attention was paid to the specific social, cultural and national characteristics of the countries concerned. An exception was the debate on Nicaragua's report, where almost all members of the Committee had proceeded on the premise that the Government's efforts to ensure respect for human rights and the fulfilment of the Covenant in a country which had suffered for decades under Somoza's dictatorial régime were being systematically obstructed by economic and military intervention.

32. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was a legal instrument of universal scope, designed to enable States with different political and social systems to co-operate in the field of human rights. Accordingly, its provisions had no immediate bearing on the legal status of the individual and affected it only through the law of the Contracting States, which had to fulfil their obligations under the Covenant by adopting legal and other measures in accordance with their respective constitutions.

(Mr. Frambach, German Democratic Republic)

33. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the report of the Human Rights Committee (arts. 6 and 20) had emphasized the importance which the preservation of peace had for the guarantee of human rights.
34. If the Committee's efforts thus far had been essentially successful it was because it had complied with the mandate assigned to it by the Covenant, despite the experts' differing views. Although the experts' views helped to guide States in their course of conduct, they were not binding. Apart from the special procedures set forth in article 41 and in the Optional Protocol, the Committee had no fact-finding, decision-making or arbitral functions, nor could it provide authentic interpretations of the Covenant. Any attempt to go beyond the limits of the mandate agreed upon by the States and to invoke rights or obligations other than those specified in the Covenant would be bound to have an adverse impact on the effectiveness of the Committee's work.
35. His delegation welcomed the Committee's wide-ranging and patient efforts to obtain overdue reports and to stress the need for punctual and comprehensive reporting. It supported the Committee's efforts to make sure that reports submitted by States were considered only with the participation, wherever possible, of a representative of the State concerned. However, the States had enough experience and sense of responsibility to decide for themselves which persons they deemed suitable to represent them during the consideration of their reports by the Committee and in what form they wished to respond to questions. In view of the complaints by States about the flood of reporting commitments and numerous overlappings, it would be worthwhile for the Centre for Human Rights to compile a list of reports submitted under various conventions by States over a certain period of time, for that would result in better co-ordination, would avoid duplication of effort and would ensure a flow of full information to the Committee.
36. Mr. de la SABLIERE (France), speaking on items 95, 96 and 97, said that France had acceded on the same day, 4 November 1980, to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights because it felt that the freedom and dignity of each human being could be assured only if all human rights were guaranteed. Moreover, the French Government had just proposed to the Parliament a draft law authorizing the accession of France to the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
37. His delegation took a great deal of interest in the report of the Human Rights Commission (A/38/40). It particularly shared the Committee's concerns on the question of publicity for its work. It was regrettable that there had been delays in the annual publication of the bound volumes of the Committee documents and that the question of publication could not be resolved until the following year. The importance his delegation attached to the publicity of the work of the Human Rights Committee was an expression of its concern to provide the Governments, non-governmental organizations and the universities of the entire world with a source of information of exceptional interest on measures taken by States to implement the Covenant.

(Mr. de la Sablière, France)

38. France had also submitted a report in 1983 to the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The experts had been instructed by the Economic and Social Council to study the possibility of including in their annual report a brief summary of the views expressed during the consideration of the reports of each country. His delegation hoped that they would respond positively to that suggestion, which would allow the Economic and Social Council to carry out its mission of monitoring the implementation of the Covenant more effectively.

39. On the question of periodicity of reports, his delegation felt that delays in the communication of those reports posed a real problem, as did a similar delay in the reports which States must communicate in implementing other international instruments of the same type. His delegation had no objection to examining the question as a whole as long as the provisions of each Convention and the competencies of each body set up to monitor the agreements were respected. To that end, his delegation suggested the following procedure: the General Assembly could request the Secretary-General to study, first, the assistance which the United Nations could provide to States needing the help of a consulting service in the preparation of their reports, and, second, the measures which each of the committees monitoring the implementation of the Covenants could take to standardize the presentation of reports. The Secretary-General's study, once completed, could be considered by the Economic and Social Council before being transmitted to the General Assembly, which would then make recommendations to the Secretariat and to the various committees.

40. Speaking on item 95, he said that France took great interest in the progress made in preparing a convention on the rights of the child. His delegation was one of the sponsors of the draft resolution which would be submitted to the General Assembly on that subject. Unfortunately, the Commission on Human Rights had not made similar progress on the elaboration of a convention against torture, which was urgently necessary. According to a recent statement by the Secretary-General of Amnesty International, torture was being used in 50 countries. The international community should react against that situation by adopting a convention, thereby renewing its condemnation of such practices, which violated the right to respect for the integrity of the human person and were an offence to human dignity.

41. Mrs. NERAD (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on item 95, said that children accounted for one third of the world's population, and that their right to happiness had been proclaimed in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Yet that right was not everywhere exercised; in some parts of the world three children in four were hungry, one in five received no education and some 50 million under 15 years of age had to work.

42. Her country, however, gave effect to the Declaration. Many of its provisions were reflected in the country's Constitution; for example, children were protected from all forms of exploitation, including child labour. Children were assured of adequate maintenance by means of the maternity and child welfare system, which included comprehensive medical services and facilities. The State provision of

(Mrs. Nerad, Byelorussian SSR)

basic child welfare services such as medical attention, pre-school care, education and vocational training ensured social equality in the health and intellectual development of children regardless of their family circumstances. In her country 93 per cent of women worked or studied, and mothers were integrated in socially productive activity thanks to the family care provided by the State. The nation attached great importance to children's healthy physical, intellectual and moral development. Secondary education for all was obligatory. One third of all books published were for children, who also had special publications, libraries and theatres.

43. Her country was convinced of the need for a convention on the rights of the child. It fully supported the initiative of the Polish People's Republic on the drafting of such a convention, and had played an active part in promoting that initiative in the Commission on Human Rights. It regretted the continued efforts made by certain countries in the Commission, to obstruct the work on such a convention; the speedy and successful conclusion of that work was of great importance for the protection of children's rights, which, unfortunately, were still neglected in the most vulnerable sectors of the world community.

44. Only in conditions of peace could the protection and harmonious development of the younger generation be assured; measures to promote children's well being must be accompanied, therefore, by constant efforts on the part of States to strengthen world peace and security and eliminate the threat of nuclear catastrophe.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.