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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 46th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIRAR (Sudan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 98: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

AGENDA ITEM 99: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS:
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AGENDA ITEM 101: INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS (A/42/3, A/42/357-S/18935)

(a) REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (A/42/40)

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(d) EFFORTS AND MEASURES FOR PROMOTING THE ERADICATION OF ILLITERACY: REPORT OF
THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND
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AGENDA ITEM 102: REPORTING OBLIGATIONS OF STATES PARTIES TO UNITED NATIONS
CONVENTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

AGENDA ITEM 106: NEW INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORDER

AGENDA ITEM 107: TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR
PUNISHMENT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/451, A/42/701)

1. Mr. MITREV (Bulgaria), speaking on agenda items 99, 101, 102 and 107, said that Bulgaria was participating actively in international co-operation in the field of human rights. In order to strengthen that co-operation, a larger number of States must assume the obligations set forth in the International Covenants on Human Rights, and the Covenants must become universal. Moreover, all Member States must observe the obligations they had undertaken by virtue of the Covenants, which was by no means the case at the current stage. Lastly, it would be useful for the Western States which had made reservations on important provisions of the Covenants to withdraw them.

2. It was essential for all States parties to the Covenants to recognize the interdependence of human rights. Civil and political rights could not be ensured if economic, social and cultural rights were neglected. It was well-known that certain States underestimated the latter group of rights, and did not feel that

(Mr. Mitrev, Bulgaria)

they were bound to respect them. In certain countries, there were even theories that because of the demise of the society of affluence the State was unable to ensure the exercise of those fundamental rights, and was therefore freed from that obligation. One could question the moral justification of a social policy aimed at ensuring the welfare of a minority, to the detriment of the poor, the homeless, the unemployed and the sick in countries with sufficient economic potential.

3. All Member States had a legal and moral obligation to pursue a humanitarian and social policy aimed at the progressive enjoyment and protection of all human rights, without exception. It was illusory to guarantee the right to vote without ensuring the right to work, freedom of thought without the right to education, or inviolability of the home without the right to shelter, and it was simply impossible to divorce the right to life from the right to peace and the right to development.

4. The question of the relationship between human rights and scientific and technological developments must be considered in a comprehensive and unbiased manner, in accordance with the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind, which provided the basis for United Nations activities in that field. In the nuclear age, it was evident that the principal task of the international community was to promote the right to life in conditions of international peace and security. All countries must therefore be guided in their conduct not by outdated military-political doctrines, but by the vital interests of international co-operation in the area of human rights.

5. Bulgaria was keenly interested in the work of the Human Rights Committee and noted that the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had made a good start. It was prepared to continue its co-operation with those bodies which were performing the tasks entrusted to them in a concrete, objective and open-minded manner.

6. Bulgaria, which was a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, had submitted its candidacy for membership of the Committee against Torture. It was prepared to co-operate with the Committee and with other States parties to the Convention.

7. The States parties to international human rights instruments should endeavour to ensure a more equitable representation of the different regions and groups of countries in the various committees established under those instruments.

8. Bulgaria welcomed the efforts made to solve the problems posed by the preparation of periodic reports, particularly for countries which, like Bulgaria, were parties to virtually all the instruments which contained reporting provisions. Moreover, it would be useful to give an opportunity to States which had not ratified the relevant covenants and conventions to submit information on the issues covered in the periodic reports of States parties. That information could be submitted directly to the General Assembly or the Economic and Social

(Mr. Mitrev, Bulgaria)

Council. The revival of that old practice could place those States in a more equitable position in relation to the States parties to the Covenants.

9. Mr. SCHWANDT (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the two International Covenants on Human Rights, the twentieth anniversary of which had been celebrated in the previous year, were a milestone in the history of the United Nations. While it was encouraging that 90 States had acceded to the Covenants since 1966, the need to ensure the universality of those instruments must be borne in mind. The ratification of the Covenants by all States would be the best way of demonstrating the commitment of Members of the United Nations to promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Charter.

10. It had often been deplored that there was a deep gap between the letter and spirit of the Covenants, on the one hand, and the reality of the recognition of human rights in today's world, on the other. It was the task of the international community to try to bridge that gap. Countries must not fall prey to the belief that the protection of the individual could be significantly improved merely by drawing up new texts. Such efforts were only meaningful if they increased the effectiveness of the principles contained in the Covenants. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which had entered into force recently and which had been signed by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, was a positive example. The elaboration of a second optional protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, was another positive example. His delegation regretted that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities had not yet been able to take action on the excellent report of its Special Rapporteur. It urged the Sub-Commission to take up the question of the second optional protocol on a priority basis and to submit its recommendations to the Commission on Human Rights speedily.

11. An inflationary increase in human rights texts which did not strengthen the effectiveness of the protection of human rights threatened to devalue the already existing Covenants. It was therefore necessary to urge all States to implement the rights defined in the Covenants and to guarantee their protection through independent national courts and international monitoring bodies. It was also necessary to develop the already existing United Nations implementation machinery. In particular, the United Nations must be enabled to investigate cases of grave human rights violations immediately when they occurred and ensure the protection of the victims through direct negotiations with the responsible Governments. To that end, public awareness of the highly valuable work of the monitoring bodies established under the Covenants should be enhanced.

12. His delegation commended the Human Rights Committee for the expertise it had shown in examining the reports submitted to it by States. It also wished to express satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which had met in 1987 for the first time. The principle of dialogue between those Committees and the States parties was of crucial importance. The public must be made fully aware of the manner in which the monitoring bodies under the Covenants assessed the situation of human rights in

(Mr. Schwandt, Federal
Republic of Germany)

those countries. One of the answers would be to strengthen the system of special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights. The allegation of interference in internal affairs brought forward by some countries was no valid argument. The opinion of the International Court of Justice in that respect was very clear.

13. The lack of effective safeguards to protect the individual against the abuse of power must be the prime concern of the international community and its main effort must be concentrated on the search for such safeguards.

14. Mr. OGURTSOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on item 99 said that his country attached great importance to the relations between human rights and the progress of science and technology. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic had been a sponsor of General Assembly resolutions 41/113 and 41/115 on that subject. He recalled in particular the provisions of paragraphs 2 and 5 of resolution 41/113 concerning the strengthening of peace and the prohibition of any propaganda in favour of war.

15. The proposals of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries for the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security on solid foundations in the political, military, humanitarian, economic and ecological fields was designed to create a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world.

16. In the Byelorussian SSR propaganda in favour of war was prohibited by law. Its policy of peace was derived from the very essence of socialism. In his country there were no social forces with any interest in war. The Byelorussian people, who had suffered cruelly during the war, were naturally inclined to support any measures aimed at safeguarding the inalienable right of every person to life.

17. His country had been one of the initiators of the adoption of the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for Benefit of Mankind and of a number of other resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Commission on Human Rights on that question. It believed that those decisions must be fully implemented by all States. In conformity with the Declaration, the Byelorussian SSR maintained scientific and technological links with many countries including the developing countries many of whose specialists it was responsible for training.

18. The Byelorussian SSR had also sponsored resolution 41/115 in which the General Assembly drew attention to the Declaration and invited the Commission on Human Rights to take appropriate measures to assist the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in preparing a study on the use of scientific and technological progress to ensure the right to work and development. Such a study would be of practical value both to the developing and developed countries and would promote the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration.

19. The Byelorussian SSR was firmly convinced that the strengthening of international peace and security, peaceful coexistence, the curbing of the arms

(Mr. Ogurtsov, Byelorussian SSR)

race, the development of international détente, the support of the just struggle of people for freedom and independence, and the restructuring of international economic relations on a just and equitable basis were essential prerequisites for successful international scientific and technological co-operation and for the use of scientific and technological progress for the purposes of development.

20. Miss BYRNE (United States of America), speaking on item 98, pointed out that nearly all international and regional human rights instruments had included articles guaranteeing freedom of religion. The adoption in 1981 of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief was a great step forward in the protection of that right. It was clear from the first report of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance that, while most countries provided legal guarantees for the protection of religious practice, there continued to be many instances of persecution on the basis of religion and manifestations of official religious intolerance. Secular Governments often feared the influence of religious leaders whom they often blamed for the ills of society.

21. The freedom to build houses of worship and to assemble there, to disseminate religious publications, to teach religion to children and to maintain communications with individuals of the same religion and belief at the national and international level was not of a nature to interfere with the operations of the State. Such freedoms could be subject only to legitimate limitations to protect public safety, health or morals.

22. The United States could not maintain genuinely friendly relations with States that systematically persecuted believers. In their high-level talks with the Soviet Union, the question of freedom of religion occupied a very important place. The United States hoped specifically that laws limiting freedom of religion in that country would be repealed, which would improve the Soviet image abroad and have a positive impact not only in the Soviet Union but also in the countries of Eastern Europe. The international community should not be satisfied with gestures. Exactly one millenium after the advent of Christianity in Russia it was dismayng to learn that believers in that country were desperately short of bibles and other religious texts. Surely, the Soviet authorities could permit their publication or importation.

23. In Iran, the persecution of the Baha'is was particularly tragic. Arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention and execution was the fate of the Baha'is because of their beliefs. Regarded as "infidels", the Baha'is were not treated on a basis of equality with other Iranian citizens and did not enjoy the protection of the law. The United States urgently appealed to the Iranian authorities on behalf of the 12 Baha'is who were about to be executed in Iran. They asked the international community not to remain silent in the face of those crimes, and also to intervene on behalf of other persons unjustly thrown into Iranian dungeons. The Iranian Government's accusation that the Baha'is were in the pay of foreigners and had always served the colonial interests of Russia and Great Britain were the absurd ramblings of an outlaw régime which deserved to be condemned for those persecutions as well as for the tragic incidents it had recently promoted in Mecca.

(Miss Byrne, United States)

24. Believers had shown throughout history that they considered their beliefs more precious than their lives. But they should not have to make that choice. The United Nations must continue its efforts to guarantee freedom of worship and belief and it could count on the support of the people and the Government of the United States.

25. Mr. ELDON (Iceland), speaking on agenda item 100 on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the situation of children in many parts of the world was critical. As victims of armed conflict, social injustice, hunger, disability, political repression and other forms of exploitation, children required the priority attention of the international community. The Nordic countries therefore felt that a convention specifically protecting the rights of children and recognizing their special status was fully justified. The Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights on a convention on the rights of the child had made much progress and it should be given the resources and time required for it to complete its work in 1989. He welcomed the proposal to allocate an additional week to the Working Group during its session of January 1988.

26. The problem of implementation machinery and technical assistance remained to be solved. The provisions aimed at protecting children in armed conflicts must also be strengthened. In the view of the Nordic countries, it was important, for the successful conclusion of the work on the convention and for broad accession to it after its adoption, that many countries from all regions should participate in its preparation. It was encouraging to note that many non-governmental organizations were participating in the drafting of the text. Their contribution was extremely constructive.

27. Mrs. BARGOUTI (Observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking on agenda item 107, said that the practice of torture, despite the condemnation of the international community, continued to spread in an alarming fashion. Everyone knew that repressive Governments and occupying Powers, such as South Africa and Israel, used torture not only to extract confessions from prisoners but also to break the will of anyone aspiring to freedom, dignity and peace. Palestinian political prisoners had been subjected by the Israeli secret service, the Shin Beit, to interrogations lasting up to 18 days. Detained in centres called "confession factories", they had no right to receive visits from Red Cross representatives, lawyers or family members. They were forced to sign confessions to acts which in many cases they had not committed. Palestinians were frequently arrested, interrogated and released without being charged with any offence.

28. The Israeli authorities were deliberately using interrogation methods that profoundly offended the traditions of Palestinian Arabs. For example, they raped, or threatened to rape, female prisoners in order to dissuade Palestinian women, by intimidating them, from participating in organized political activities and in order to exert pressure on the men in their families. Exposure of cases of rape and torture at the start of the occupation, after the six-day war and in the early 1970s, had led to a decrease in sexual violence during interrogation. Since then, threats of rape continued to take place, and if rarely carried out, none the less

(Mrs. Bargouti, Observer, PLO)

left deep scars on the minds of the female prisoners. Other forms of torture, however, were still being practised.

29. After interrogation, Palestinian prisoners were sent to Israeli prisons where their relations with Israeli common criminals were tense at best. Realizing that their enemy was the prison administration and not the Israeli prisoners, the Palestinian prisoners tried to keep their distance and not respond to the attacks of which they were frequently victims. At times Israeli prisoners had supported Palestinian prisoners in demanding better prison conditions. The humiliations inflicted on the Palestinian prisoners were contrary to international standards. The methods of punishment used had led the Palestinian political prisoners to call strikes, particularly hunger strikes. The most recent one was in March 1987.

30. As in South Africa, the situation of imprisoned Palestinian children was appalling, as evidenced in Amnesty International's 1986 report on the camp at Al-Fara'a and the studies made by independent investigators. Children were victims of arbitrary arrest and interrogated, humiliated, tortured and subjected to sexual assault, and at times wounded by bullets.

31. Despite those cruel Nazi practices, the Palestinian people were not abandoning the struggle. Prisoners who left prison without excessively serious physical or mental problems said that the experience had made them stronger. They had learned not to surrender their rights and to struggle as a group. They were more dedicated than ever to the cause of the national rights of the Palestinian people.

32. Mr. LD (Mongolia) said that the increase in the number of States parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights showed a willingness on the part of the countries acceding to those instruments to ensure their citizens the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms enshrined in them. One should not forget, however, that barely half the States Members of the United Nations were parties to the Covenants. His delegation therefore appealed to the States members that had not yet done so, particularly those who delighted in denouncing human rights violations in other countries, to accede to those instruments.

33. The right to work, training, medical services and social protection, the right to participate in managing the affairs of State and the right of peoples to choose the economic, social and political system that suited them, were all enshrined in the Covenants. It was no coincidence that the countries that refused to accede to them were the same ones that refused to implement their provisions and embody them in their domestic law. In that context, the efforts made in certain circles to denounce the so-called human rights violations of other countries were no more than an act of interference in the internal affairs of those countries.

34. In keeping with the obligations imposed on it by the Covenants, Mongolia had continuously adopted measures to broaden and enhance the rights and freedoms of its citizens. Those rights were also fully guaranteed by its Constitution and other Mongolian legal provisions.

(Mr. Bold, Mongolia)

35. On the international level, Mongolia was among the socialist countries which, at the forty-first session of the General Assembly, had supported the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security, an important element of which was the strengthening of human rights. The socialist countries were convinced that the security of States was inseparable from the protection of those rights, in particular the right to live in peace. In that spirit his delegation had proposed, at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the adoption of the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace. It welcomed the General Assembly's decision to consider, at its forty-third session, the question of the implementation of that important Declaration.

36. As a party to the International Covenants, Mongolia regularly submitted its reports to the committees monitoring the implementation of those instruments. His delegation paid tribute to those committees, which facilitated the exchange of experience and the development of common approaches in the area of human rights. It opposed attempts to use those committees for investigation, incrimination or unilateral condemnation. Recognizing the universality of the provisions contained in the Covenants meant also recognizing that there were different ways of implementing them, depending on social and other conditions in each country.

37. His delegation welcomed the UNESCO representative's expression of firm support for the elimination of illiteracy and the proclamation of the year 1990 as the International Literacy Year, which would make an important contribution to the realization of the human right to literacy and education. His delegation was convinced that illiteracy was closely linked to past colonial domination and underdevelopment. Its elimination was therefore one of the basic conditions for development and for the welfare of peoples. His delegation intended, together with other delegations, to submit a draft resolution on the proclamation of the year 1990 as the International Literacy Year, which it hoped would receive the Committee's full support.

38. Ms. MARCOULLIS (Cyprus) said that her delegation attached great importance to the work of the Human Rights Committee, whose report it had read with great interest, and regretted the cancellation of the Committee's 1986 autumn session. More publicity should be given to the text of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to the work of the Human Rights Committee. The question of publication of bound volumes of the Committee's official records should continue to receive the attention it deserved.

39. Her delegation welcomed the work of the first session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in particular its suggestions and recommendations of a general nature.

40. Referring to document A/42/450 on the status of the International Covenants and the Optional Protocol, she expressed her delegation's concern over the slow rate of new ratifications of and accessions to the Covenants. Cyprus, which had been among the first to sign and ratify the two Covenants, attached great importance to the universal application of those instruments. Her delegation therefore urged all countries that had not done so to ratify the Covenants and

(Ms. Marcoullis, Cyprus)

requested the United Nations bodies that dealt with human rights to consider ways and means of contributing to their universal application. The need for universal application was especially great, in view of the human rights violations, whether blatant or subtle, which continued to occur throughout the world. Her delegation welcomed the constructive approach adopted both by the newly established Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on Civil and Political Rights, both of which included Cypriot nationals among their members.

41. Her delegation earnestly hoped that the reaffirmation of the importance of the Covenants, the twentieth anniversary of which had been commemorated in 1986, would result in an upsurge in ratifications of those instruments, as well as a renewed commitment to work for their practical application.

42. Mrs. PANDEY (Nepal), speaking on agenda item 100, found it encouraging that the General Assembly, in its resolution 41/116, had accorded the highest priority to the drafting of a convention on the rights of the child. Access to basic services, which were essential for survival, should be among the fundamental rights of children. In that regard, as stated in the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report entitled The State of the World's Children, 1987, there was a "silent emergency", which was clearly demonstrated by the deaths of 250,000 children each week from infections and malnutrition.

43. In the majority of developing countries, particularly in the southern region of Asia, the high birth rate was closely linked to high rates of infant and child mortality. If population growth were to be reduced, it was necessary to lower infant mortality rates.

44. In Nepal, His Majesty's Government's commitment to promoting the development of children had led to the formulation of a national policy for child development, which had been incorporated into the country's national development plan for the period 1985-1990. That policy emphasized measures aimed at reducing the infant mortality rate. Priority had been given to maternal and child health care services at the village level, universal immunization by 1990, oral rehydration, and education for women on child care and nutrition. Non-governmental organizations had played an important role in that regard. She expressed her delegation's appreciation to UNICEF for its sustained co-operation in Nepal's efforts to uplift the status of the country's children.

45. At the regional level, the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation (SAARC), in co-operation with UNICEF, had held a conference on children in southern Asia, in New Delhi from 27-29 October 1986. That conference had recommended that SAARC member States should incorporate the principle of "children first" in their national policies. That principle had been endorsed by the SAARC summit meeting of heads of State and Government in Bangalore, India, in November 1986. Upon the recommendation of the SAARC Standing Committee, annual reviews of the situation of children and exchange of experience among SAARC member States would be undertaken, beginning in the current year.

(Mrs. Pandey, Nepal)

46. Unfortunately, the economic difficulties currently confronting the developing countries had led to further austerity in the allocation of resources for the improvement of the situation of children. Her delegation urged the international community to take concerted action so that basic rights and services could be provided to all children by the turn of the century.

47. Mr. FAROUQUE (Sri Lanka) expressed the hope that the Commission on Human Rights would continue to accord the highest priority to the elaboration of a draft convention on the rights of the child in order to have it completed in 1989, the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Child.

48. Pursuant to the Declaration's provisions, his Government had successfully launched an overall strategy for the well-being of children, based inter alia on the participation of mothers in health and educational matters; as a result, infant, child and maternal mortality rates had declined considerably.

49. At the regional level, Sri Lanka and other member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) had recognized, at the Association's summit meeting in November 1986, that children should be given the highest priority in the formulation of national development plans. The Heads of State or Government of the Association had underlined the importance of enhancing public awareness and building a national consensus on children's rights. They had also subscribed to the goals of universal immunization by 1990, universal primary education, maternal and child nutrition, provision of safe drinking water and adequate shelter for all by the year 2000. They had directed the SAARC Standing Committee to undertake annual reviews of the situation of children in the region and to monitor the relevant programmes and exchange of experience. Those positive steps had been enhanced by the holding of the SAARC Conference on South Asian Children, held at New Delhi in October 1986 under UNICEF auspices.

50. In that connection, UNICEF had published an overview of the situation of children, including suggestions for measures to take account of the main social factors of development related to children - education, nutrition, health, sanitation and communication; he stressed the importance of co-operation and continued exchange of experience among countries in that field. His delegation firmly believed that efforts made at the regional level would be of benefit in policy formulation and programme planning for the well-being of children, and it paid tribute to UNICEF and its Executive Director, in particular for launching the oral rehydration therapy campaign, which had saved so many young lives.

51. He welcomed the report of the independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, which warranted very close scrutiny by all countries, whatever their political or socio-economic system or stage of development, and could broad their perspective in the quest for solutions to humanitarian problems. The document should also be made available to specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies in order that they might take it into account in formulating their policies. The recommendations it contained could also assist non-governmental organizations in dealing with the changing realities in that field.

(Mr. Farouque, Sri Lanka)

52. His delegation, recognizing the importance of implementing the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind, deemed it essential, since human rights, development and peace were interrelated, that scientific and technological developments should be used for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all mankind. It was equally important that the industrialized nations should promote the transfer of technology and scientific know-how to the less advanced countries and that the latter should adapt the technology to local requirements.

53. Mrs. PULIDO (Venezuela) regretted that, despite the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and General Assembly resolution 36/55, as well as the efforts of the Commission on Human Rights, which her country strongly supported, religious intolerance and discrimination persisted in many regions of the world and were the cause of serious violations of human rights. At the same time, her delegation was pleased that the Commission on Human Rights had appointed a rapporteur to look into violations of that sort and considered that, in order to implement the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the Commission should continue to accord priority to that sort of inquiry. In addition, the United Nations should attach greater importance to promotion and information activities and to teaching programmes in that field. The NGOs, too, had a leading role to play in promoting freedom of worship and tolerance. States parties to the Declaration and other instruments relating to intolerance must likewise take all steps, at the political and administrative levels, to observe and uphold the right of everyone to freedom of conscience and religion, including the teaching of such observance to their citizens at the earliest age and at all levels of education.

54. Her country also believed that matters should be taken further and that an international instrument should be drawn up to embody and develop the principles set forth in the Declaration. For that reason, it supported the Commission's decision to consider, at its next session, the possibility of drawing up a convention on the matter.

55. On the subject of torture, she noted that the provisions of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment were unfortunately being flouted in many regions of the world. But the fact that the instrument had entered into force so soon after its adoption by the General Assembly was an encouraging sign. Venezuela should be able to ratify it very soon without any problem, since its provisions were fully consistent with the national laws. She noted with satisfaction that the first meeting of States parties to the Convention would take place in 1988 and said it was essential that the committee against torture, to be elected on that occasion, should be endowed with all the requisite administrative and financial resources to carry out its task effectively.

56. With regard to the obligation to submit reports on the implementation of United Nations conventions on human rights, her country saw in those reports a highly effective means of verifying whether States were duly complying with their undertakings in that regard. But the existing procedure had two shortcomings: it

(Mrs. Pulido, Venezuela)

could prove burdensome for countries lacking the requisite administrative infrastructure; and the multiplicity of conventions and other international instruments could give rise to overlapping and duplication. Perhaps, therefore, the bodies mandated to monitor the implementation of such instruments should reconsider the guidelines and directives related to reporting, with a view to harmonization. Also important was the strengthening of training activities and advisory services to assist States in carrying out their obligations effectively, including the organization of seminars on the drafting of national legal norms in conformity with the provisions of international instruments or on reporting. Her country intended to participate actively in the meeting to be organized in that regard for the Spanish-speaking countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region.

57. Lastly, she reiterated her country's interest in establishing a convention on the rights of the child, and stressed how important it was for the working group of the Commission on Human Rights to speed up its work in that regard.

58. The CHAIRMAN said that the general discussion of agenda items 98 to 102, 106 and 107 was concluded.

AGENDA ITEM 104: INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRAFFIC IN DRUGS (A/C.3/42/L.43)

Draft resolution A/C.3/42/L.43

59. Mrs. ASHTON (Bolivia) said that the Philippines had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution. As a result of last-minute negotiations, a number of changes had been made to the draft resolution. In the second line of the first preambular paragraph, the words "by reason of its pernicious physical and psychological effects and" had been inserted after the word "individuals". The revised version of that paragraph would read:

"Conscious of the adverse effects of the global problem of drug abuse, illicit production and trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances on individuals by reason of its pernicious physical and psychological effects and, in that it limits their creativity and the full development of their potential, and on States, in that it is a threat to their security and is prejudicial to their democratic institutions and their economic, social, legal and cultural structures,".

In the fifth and sixth lines of the fourth preambular paragraph, the word "due" to be inserted between the words "taking" and "account". In the third and fourth lines of operative paragraph 3, the words "the increasingly closer link between drug trafficking and" had been replaced by the words "its increasingly closer links with".

60. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden) thanked the Bolivian delegation and the other sponsors of the draft resolution for the last-minute changes to the text.

61. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, if there were no objections, the Committee should adopt the revised draft resolution without a vote.

62. It was so decided.

63. Draft resolution A/C.3/42/L.43, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.

64. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the reports of the Secretary-General in documents A/42/489 and A/42/490 submitted in pursuance of resolution 41/127.

65. It was so decided.

66. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 104.

AGENDA ITEM 96: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (A/C.3/42/L.29/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/42/L.29/Rev.1

67. Mr. GOLEMANCY (Bulgaria) said that the following change had been made to the wording of the draft resolution to meet the wishes expressed by some delegations: in the first line of the ninth preambular paragraph the words ", in the light of the respective legislation of States," should be inserted after the word "Mindful". Since the draft resolution reproduced much of the content of resolutions adopted by consensus in earlier years and the revision was the result of lengthy consultations with the delegations concerned, he hoped that the draft would be adopted by consensus.

68. Mr. GALAL (Egypt) thanked Bulgaria, Senegal and Tunisia for taking Egypt's comments into account in preparing the draft resolution. He stressed that it was essential for delegations intending to make changes in draft resolutions to hold consultations, in view of the cultural and other differences that existed between countries. Under the Egyptian Constitution the family was the basis of society and the Egyptian Government took all possible measures within the national legislation to ensure equality between men and women.

69. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, if there were no objections, the Committee should adopt the revised draft resolution without a vote.

70. It was so decided.

71. Draft resolution A/C.3/42/L.29/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.

72. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that, in her opinion, the ninth preambular paragraph as drafted in the French version was not consistent with the spirit of the draft resolution as intended by the Bulgarian delegation.

73. Mr. GOLEMANCY (Bulgaria) asked the Secretariat to take that pertinent observation into account.

74. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 96.

75. Mr. YAKOVLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation had listened with great attention to the United States representative's statement. The Soviet Union recognized the importance of the right of freedom of religious belief and its position had always been based on the principle of personal freedom. Its attitude towards that right was one of tolerance, a tolerance which was enshrined in the Constitution, laws and practice of the Soviet Union. Accordingly, in 1988 the USSR would celebrate a thousand years of Christianity in Russia. The United States representative had expressed the wish for an exchange of religious publications with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was always ready to consider the list of articles coming within the scope of trade with any country, including the United States. But the question was outside the scope of the item under consideration. As far as respect for freedom of religion was concerned, his delegation could only reiterate its frequently expressed wish that the United States would conform to the principles set forth in the International Covenants on Human Rights. There could be no constructive dialogue on freedom of religion unless it was based on the Covenants, in particular article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.