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Agenda item 43: Draft Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (continued) 29

Chairman: Mr. Humberto DÍAZ CASANUEVA (Chile).

AGENDA ITEM 43


1. Mr. STEVENSON (United States of America) said that his Government placed the highest priority on the fight against discrimination everywhere. The moment when the General Assembly, representing the world community, prepared to offer a strong and splendid affirmation in response to the universal cry for freedom and justice was one of the great moments of history.

2. The United States had experienced three revolutions of freedom, the first when it had won the right to national independence, the second when all persons held in slavery had been proclaimed free; the third was the revolution through which his country was now passing and which was to ensure greater freedom and full human rights for all citizens. In the century that followed the Civil War, the United States had become a melting pot. Slowly and sometimes painfully the various ethnic and religious groups had learned to live together, to their mutual benefit. But the American Negro, although emancipated from slavery, had not been elevated to full citizenship. Scattered around an impoverished countryside, huddled in the slums of cities, he had become the forgotten man of American society. Under various regulations, customs and pretexts, both flagrant and covert, he had been barred from the mainstream of national life. He had been denied equal access to housing, to the polls and even to public facilities in some parts of the country. He had been denied equal opportunities for education and hence for employment. His life too often belied the American faith in the inherent human dignity proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. A veil of silence and apathy had long obscured the unequal treatment of Negro Americans, until, at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, courageous few had formed organizations to promote civil rights and inter-racial harmony, gradually awakening and then stirring the conscience of church, labour, civic and other leaders. They had achieved sporadic success, crystallizing public opinion, until at last a united movement for genuine equality had been created. Although many white Americans had taken a vigorous part in the fight for equal rights, the main role had been played by the American Negro himself.

3. The machinery of the national Government had now been mobilized to destroy racial discrimination in the United States society for ever. By legislation, by the use of the courts, by federal regulation, by political and community leadership, by education and example, the federal Government was systematically breaking down the network of racial discrimination. It would be seen from the 1963 report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights that his country still had a long way to go, because ignorance was stubborn and prejudice died hard, but that distinct advances had been achieved in the struggle for equality. Mob violence against Negroes accused of crimes was fast disappearing. In the two decades before the Second World War, more than 300 Negroes had been lynched by lawless mobs; during the past decade, there had been only four such cases. An amendment to the Constitution was in process of ratification to outlaw the poll tax in federal elections. By recent legislation the federal Government had obtained authority to bring suits for an injunction against any state which denied equal rights in voting, and it was using that authority with vigour. The President had proposed a federal law against so called "literacy tests", and in the next federal election, more Negroes would vote in the southern states than in any previous election.

4. A Fair Employment Practices Committee had been established in 1941. It had lapsed after the Second World War, but its re-establishment was now proposed. In the meantime a Committee of Equal Opportunity was operating under the Vice-President with powers to recommend termination of Government contracts where discriminatory practices were followed. Twenty-three states of the Union, with a population of 170 million, including two former slave-holding states, had fair employment statutes barring discrimination in both public and private employment. The United States armed forces, which had been segregated even during the war against racism and fascism, were now totally integrated. Inter-state travel by rail, bus or airline and facilities at terminals were almost fully integrated. Equal access to hotels and other public accommodation was now legally enforceable in thirty-nine states and in many cities and countries outside those states. Slow but encouraging progress had also been made in housing. Private covenants forbidding purchase of property on racial grounds had been outlawed in 1948. In 1949 the Federal Housing Administration had refused further assistance to any housing project run on a segregated basis. In 1962, the President had prohibited segregation in any new
construction built with federal funds, and during the current year he had asked for authority to terminate funds for any project—housing, hospital, school or road—where the violation of the Federal civil rights involved discrimination in hiring or occupancy. Thirty-four states and fifty-five major cities had taken steps to forbid discrimination in housing.

5. Since the Supreme Court had decided in 1954 that equality of educational opportunity was incompatible with racially separate facilities, segregation had been breached in the higher educational institutions of every state in the Union. Pockets of resistance to integration in primary and secondary schools had been narrowed, and efforts to evade the Supreme Court ruling by quasi-legal means had been repeatedly frustrated by the courts. Recently, thousands of federal troops had supported the right of a single individual to sit in the classrooms of the University of Mississippi. Surely, no one would doubt the resolve of the United States Government to enforce the Supreme Court decision on equal rights in education.

6. His country was moving through a period of social change, which, like social change anywhere, was a disturbing phenomenon, but it was advancing briskly and surely in the direction of equal rights for all. The reaction of world opinion showed that people throughout the world recognized the difference between a country which was having racial trouble because it was unwilling to make progress and a country which was having such trouble precisely because it was making progress. Unlike those Governments which, as the draft Declaration said, imposed racial discrimination by means of legislative, administrative and other measures, his own Government used such measures to destroy racial discrimination. As one of the speakers participating in the recent march on Washington had said, the fight for human rights was not for the sake of the Negro, but for the sake of the image, the idea, and the aspiration of America itself.

7. In the course of its struggle for human rights, the United States was coming to realize increasingly that those rights encompassed the major problems of mankind: the right to live in peace; to earn a living; to raise a family free of fear. Was not peace itself, as the President of the United States had recently asked, basic to the nature of human rights? The right to self-determination had been achieved in Asia, the Middle East and Africa with amazing speed and amazingly little bloodshed. The shackles of colonialism had been shaken off, except in a last few hopeless outposts. Fifty-six new Members of the United Nations had gained their independence. The achievement of national self-determination, however, should not be mistaken for the achievement of human rights. History was streaked with unholy alliances between nationalism and oppression. The nation State, however indispensable, was a very imperfect institution, and most of the human rights discussed in the Third Committee concerned not the right of national self-determination, but the duty of States to limit their power and to enforce safeguards against tyranny over the mind and welfare of the individual. How many Members of the United Nations would validly claim that their societies were free of discrimination based on race, religion, tribe or caste? The ferment and revolution of the current era must go deeper than nationalism. They must go to the very frontiers of the human intellect and to embody the principles of freedom in existing institutions.

8. The draft Declaration now before the Committee (Economic and Social Council resolution 958 E [XXXVI]), annex was the first document dealing with the problem honestly, without bitterness and in terms appropriate for action. His delegation would support the draft as it stood. At the same time, the Committee should be thinking of the next step: of ways to improve the fact-finding and reporting machinery of the United Nations, so that the silence in which race discrimination festered would be broken. Would not the founding nations be found to exchange experience in solving the problems of race relations. Members should be helped to build up national institutions and national laws to give practical meaning to the principles endorsed by the draft Declaration. The experience of regional institutions should be studied for any lessons which could be drawn to improve the machinery of the promotion of human rights within the world community. Every opportunity should be taken for action in the defence of human rights, as the United Nations would thus increase its capacity to act when the next call came. The struggle to end racial discrimination concerned nothing less than the quality of life during the current era.

9. Mr. LAMANI (Albania) said that in his country all citizens, without distinction of race, nationality, or religion, enjoyed equal rights under the constitution. Any attempt to spread racial or religious hatred or discord was punished under the law. All citizens enjoyed an equal right to vote and to obtain employment and education.

10. Unfortunately, inequality was still rife in certain countries, where racial policies were applied and colonial exploitation was practised. Racism was the outcome of the profound contradiction now undermining the systems of exploitation. Manifestations of racial inequality were proof of the weakness of the system of government under which they occurred.

11. His delegation expressed its sympathy with the Negro population of the United States, which continued to be subjected to racial discrimination in forms which no longer existed even in the colonies. If the United States Government had really wished to end discrimination, the shameful practice would have been eliminated long ago. It was unfortunate that the United States delegation had attempted to weaken the draft Declaration by amendments designed to lessen its impact. The Albanian Government believed that the United Nations and in other international bodies, consistently fought racial discrimination and apartheid. In its note of 11 May 1963 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, his Government had stressed that it was not maintaining diplomatic or economic relations with the Republic of South Africa and had no intention of establishing such relations until that country had abandoned its apartheid policy.

12. His delegation approved of the draft Declaration, but felt that the text might be improved by some of the amendments which had been submitted and which might make it a more effective weapon in the struggle against segregation and racial discrimination.

13. As the question of racial discrimination was closely linked to colonialism and neo-colonialism, his delegation supported the amendments proposed by Algeria, Guinea, Mauritania and Senegal (A/C3/L.1068/Rev.1). It also supported the amendments of the USSR, (A/C3/L.1067 and Czechoslovakia (A/C3/L.1069), since in certain countries fascist organizations existed which practised racial terror and propagated racist ideas. His delegation was con-
vinced that, by continuing their struggle with the support of all nations which cherished justice and freedom, peoples and groups which were still subjected to racial discrimination would put an end to that terrible and shameful scourge of humanity. The final text of the draft Declaration would make an effective contribution to that endeavour.

14. Mr. PISANI MASSAMORMILE (Italy) remarked that, in dealing with the vital problem before it, the Committee should bear in mind the following considerations. It was often said that a declaration differed from a convention in that it had merely a moral value, whereas a convention had legal force. The distinction was true in a narrow sense, but in fact the law and social phenomena continually influenced each other. Such social manifestations as moral norms and principles, if supported by a strong body of opinion, exerted a pressure which no legal system, national or international, could withstand. The Committee should therefore give the declarations the force of a code of moral norms, and not of a mere protest against the concept of racial discrimination. Those norms would be based on a wide consensus of opinion and would carry the weight of United Nations approval. An effective first step would thus be taken towards the formation of a convention against racial discrimination, an instrument which he hoped would be drafted and submitted without delay.

15. It was precisely because a convention was soon to be concluded that the Committee should not modify the substance of the draft Declaration. The Commission on Human Rights, in which many tendencies were represented, had arrived at a most impressive text after extensive consideration. The draft was well-balanced, referring first to general norms and principles (articles 1 and 2), then to norms for Member States (articles 4, 5 and 8), then to precepts for individuals (article 9), addressing itself, lastly, to international organizations (article 10). The text could no doubt be improved, but it would be unfortunate if its scope and meaning were to be weakened by the introduction of ideas secondary to the question of racial discrimination. He might comment later on the amendments submitted. In the meantime, he pointed out that some of them would be valid only if the declarative instrument were to be a mere protest against racial discrimination. Where he was concerned, the declaration should be more, if it was to constitute a weapon against discrimination.

16. Mr. Antonio BELAUNDE (Peru) said that Peru was a multiracial and democratic country firmly adhering to the Christian concept of man and to the liberal and egalitarian ideology. The draft Declaration was in line with those ideas. Peru deplored discriminatory practices wherever they occurred and agreed that a solemn pronouncement of the General Assembly should condemn them and exhort all nations to promote harmony among their citizens. The text prepared by the Commission of Human Rights maintained a commendable balance between universal principles and injunctions relating to the particular circumstances of the moment, which gave the item particular urgency, namely, the policy now pursued in the Republic of South Africa. The Committee should retain that balance. His delegation particularly appreciated article 2 of the draft, which related to the protection of less favoured groups. Peruvian law contained special provisions under which indigenous communities enjoyed the status of a juridical person.

17. Any modification which the draft might require concerned, not its substance, but matters of detail and emphasis. That view appeared to be shared by most delegations, and the amendments, at least those relating to the preamble, were mainly concerned with clarity of expression. The amendment which Peru had submitted jointly with Nigeria and Paraguay (A/C.3/L.1065) pursued the same end. His delegation supported the Australian amendment (A/C.3/L.1066) and the amendments submitted by Algeria, Guinea, Mauritania and Senegal. It also endorsed some of the amendments proposed by the seven Latin-American Powers, (A/C.3/L.1073 and Corr.1), which it had helped to prepare. More particularly, the amendment to the eighth preamble paragraph usefully clarified the text. In his view, however, it should read: "Convinced that all forms of racial discrimination, and still more so governmental policies based on prejudice of superiority or hatred ....". The amendment had the merit of clearly expressing the idea that while all forms of discrimination were repugnant, a discrimination governmental policies deserved particular condemnation. Moreover, the amendment corrected an error in the original text, which was that, through inadvertence, policies based on racial superiority were referred to in language suggesting that such superiority was a valid concept. The changes proposed in points 3 and 5 of document A/C.3/L.1073 and Corr.1 also commended themselves to the delegation. Peru would abstain on the other amendments in the document, since he was not convinced that they would improve the text. More particularly, he saw no need to modify the text of the paragraph following the ninth preamble paragraph. That passage had been drafted with particular acumen by the Commission on Human Rights. He further supported the amendments submitted by Guinea, Lebanon and Tunisia (A/C.3/L.1084), as well as the first Tunisian amendment (A/C.3/L.1074).

18. The amendments relating to the operative part of the draft Declaration seemed to fall into two categories, those of form and those of substance. The latter included proposals for new articles and paragraphs, generally tending to stress the prescriptive character of the text. In his view, those amendments went beyond the scope of a declaration and would be more appropriate in the nature of an instrument of that importance as the draft Declaration, words must be used with care and restraint.

19. Mrs. VILLGRATNER (Austria), explaining the amendments sponsored by her delegation, observed that the proposal in document A/C.3/L.1074 (also sponsored by Nigeria) was intended to show that discrimination was forbidden in all matters and not only in matters of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and also to widen the area of protection to include groups of persons and institutions as well as individuals. The aim of amendment A/C.3/L.1075 was to reintroduce the expression "public service" used in the same context in article 21 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since her delegation had been informed that in some countries there were no appointments to public service, it had decided to revise its amendment and to propose that the original wording be used. Consequently, it was agreed not to employ the expression "public service" as the wording in draft article 6 (A/C.3/L.1075/Rev.1). Amendment A/C.3/L.1076 was designed not only to improve the grammar but to make it clear that incitement to either hatred or violence amounted to discrimination. Her delegation's last amendment, in
20. The observance of human rights and freedoms was so fundamental to the Austrian way of life that her delegation would oppose any compromise in the matter. There might be a need for some accommodation in the drafting of a convention, where it was a question of enabling a maximum number of States to assume, perhaps only gradually, the obligations laid down, but in a declaration which was meant to proclaim and define the basic right to non-discrimination the maximum formula should be sought. The policies of the United States of America and A/C.3/L.1071.

21. Mr. MOLINA SALAS (Argentina), referring to document A/C.3/L.1073 and Corr.1, announced that the sponsors, to meet points raised in the discussion, had decided to insert in point 6 of the amendment the words "throughout the world" after "speedily eliminating" and the word "especially" after "to that end".

22. Mr. KOMBET (Central African Republic) said that the objectives of the Universal Declaration had not yet been attained by millions of human beings who, because of their race or colour, were still subjected to humiliation, privation and physical violence. Through clever manoeuvres the Declaration had been deprived of binding force, and it stood merely as a body of principles whose abstract and inert nature seemed to enshrine those who would raise discrimination to the level of State norms. How different a picture was presented by South Africa and by the United States, for instance, which was doing all it could to eliminate racial discrimination within its boundaries.

23. His delegation considered the draft Declaration to be no more than a step towards the conclusion of an international convention ensuring the unconditional application of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the subject of non-discrimination. He would vote for the draft Declaration and for all amendments which would strengthen it.

24. Mrs. KONANTZ (Canada) remarked that her country had given ample proof of its opposition to racial discrimination and that it shared the concern of other countries regarding that great problem. As Canada had been a member of the Commission on Human Rights during the drafting of the document and before the Third Committee, her delegation knew the long and painstaking work that had been done, and while it was prepared to give careful consideration to any amendments that would strengthen the text, it hoped that the present drafting to be satisfactory. The Committee appeared to be in basic agreement on the draft Declaration as it stood. She hoped that it would avoid an emotional approach and would strive to secure a dispassionate understanding of the problem of racial discrimination and the best way of guaranteeing its elimination.

25. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to document A/C.3/L.1114, which listed the amendments submitted to the Committee in the order of the paragraphs and articles of the draft Declaration. The Committee had only two more meetings to devote to the draft Declaration, and he trusted that voting on the preamble could begin at the following meeting.

26. Mr. ATTLEE (United Kingdom) expressed the hope that the Committee would be given sufficient time to study the amendments and drew attention to rule 121 of the rules of procedure. The draft Declaration was an extremely important document and he for one would need instructions from his Government before he could vote on amendments of substance.

27. Mrs. DICK (United States of America) proposed that the Committee's time-table should be rearranged so as to allow at least five more meetings for the consideration of the draft Declaration.

28. The CHAIRMAN asked the United States representative to defer her proposal until the following day, when the Committee would have a better idea of the time it would need to complete consideration of the item.

29. Mrs. DICK (United States of America) agreed.

30. Mr. KABBANI (Syria) said that discrimination was alien to his country and to the Arab peoples generally. In fact, the word "discrimination" had only recently been introduced in his country's dictionaries to explain events occurring elsewhere. Arabs had throughout history assimilated peoples of different colour and belief and treated them as absolute equals. His delegation therefore wholeheartedly supported the Committee's present endeavour to eliminate racial discrimination throughout the world. The draft Declaration, once adopted, would be only a statement of principles and would not cause discrimination to disappear overnight, but with the willingness of the Members of the United Nations it could go a considerable way towards that end.


32. The Israel representative had described the tragedy of the Jews under Hitler (1215th meeting) but had not mentioned that the Israeli authorities were imitating the nazis in their treatment of the Arab minority in occupied Palestine. That minority was subjected to discriminatory and oppressive measures and had been placed under a military régime which resembled the nazi concentration camps. His delegation also condemned the policies of discrimination practiced in Angola, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and Israel.

33. Mr. YAPOU (Israel) said that in reply to the Syrian representative's unfounded accusations he would only express the wish that the people of Syria might be associated in the building-up of a democratic and progressive social order in the same way as the Arab citizens of Israel had been.

34. Mr. KABBANI (Syria) remarked that he was not the original author of those accusations; in 1959, a
group of Israel Jews had protested to the Government that most Arab citizens were still under military government and were denied freedom of movement, freedom to reside where they wished, and the right to belong to trade unions or to obtain employment on the same terms as other citizens.

35. Mrs. KUME (Japan) said that her delegation was deeply concerned with the problem of racial discrimination, because the absolute equality of races was one of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Her Government had always striven to uphold the principle of the equality of all men and all peoples, without distinction as to race, colour, or religion, and discrimination of any kind was strictly prohibited by the Japanese constitution. Consequently, it was ready to co-operate with other Member States in the adoption of the draft Declaration and was carefully studying the various amendments, on which her delegation would express its views at a later stage.

36. Mr. HAMID (Sudan) noted the unanimity of opinion in the Committee in favour of the draft Declaration. He need scarcely say that his Government was opposed to all forms of intolerance and discrimination and was determined to put an end to them. His delegation would vote on the various amendments to the draft Declaration according to their merits.

37. Mr. NEJJARI (Morocco) said that, while some Governments were courageously trying to end racial discrimination, certain others continued not only to tolerate it but to practise it as a systematic policy, in disregard of repeated General Assembly resolutions and of the Charter, which expressly referred to the dignity of the human person. The text of the draft Declaration, while unexceptionable, did not go far enough, and he would therefore support point 6 of the amendments in document A/C.3/L.1073 and Corr.1, regarding educational measures, and any other amendments which would strengthen the draft.

38. U MYAT TUN (Burma) stated that Burma, with its centuries-old tradition of religious, cultural and social tolerance, was opposed to all forms of racial discrimination anywhere. He would support amendments A/C.3/L.1065, A/C.3/L.1066 and A/C.3/L.1068/Rev.1, which would considerably improve the preamble of the draft Declaration.

39. Mr. FARMAN–FARMAIAN (ILO) recalled that the ILO had participated in the preparatory work on the draft Declaration, and that the fifth preambular paragraph referred expressly to international instruments adopted by the ILO. The principle of non-discrimination had always guided the ILO in its legislative activities and had been embodied in many of its international instruments, specifically in the Convention and Recommendation concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation,1 adopted in 1958 and thus far ratified by thirty-nine member States. The Declaration concerning the Aims and Purposes of the International Labour Organisation which was adopted at Philadelphia on 10 May 1944 and which was an integral part of the constitution of that organisation affirmed that "all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity". He could state without hesitation that the Committee, in adopting the draft Declaration before it, would be making an effective contribution to the attainment of those objectives to which his own agency whole-heartedly subscribed.

40. Miss WACHUKU (Nigeria) and Mrs. DICK (United States of America) announced that the sponsors of amendments A/C.3/L.1070 and A/C.3/L.1078 had withdrawn their respective texts and had agreed upon a compromise wording for the proposed new article, which appeared in document A/C.3/L.1113.

41. Mr. NAIMBAYE (Chad) announced that his delegation and that of Nigeria had decided to withdraw their respective amendments to article 8 (A/C.3/L.1081 and A/C.3/L.1085) and to replace them by a joint amendment, contained in document A/C.3/L.1115.

42. The CHAIRMAN remarked that it would facilitate the Committee's work if other sponsors of amendments pursuing the same purpose could agree upon a compromise text.

Mrs. Radslev Thomsen (Denmark), Rapporteur, took the Chair.

43. Mr. DELGADO (Senegal) said that the sponsors of the amendments in document A/C.3/L.1068/Rev.1 had been urged to withdraw their proposals on the ground that the item under discussion did not relate to the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples. However, colonialism was one of the basic causes of racial discrimination, and as such it should be mentioned. The original wording of the fourth preambular paragraph did not reproduce the exact phrases used in the declaration on the granting of independence; the authors of the draft Declaration now under discussion had placed their own interpretation on the earlier text, and the amendments of Algeria, Guinea, Mauritania and Senegal simply introduced the correct wording.

44. His delegation, together with those of other African countries, had considered the amendments in document A/C.3/L.1073 and Corr.1; while they did not intend to submit a formal sub-amendment, they would prefer the words "effective observance of the universal principles" in point 6 to be replaced by the words "the universal and effective recognition and observance of the principles".

45. Mr. BAROOY (Saudi Arabia), introducing his amendments to the preamble of the draft Declaration (A/C.3/L.1099), said that his intention in qualifying the word "dignity" by the adjective "inherent" was to indicate that the dignity referred to in the Charter was not that which a man might lose through such causes as lack of education, but his inborn dignity as a human being. The amendment to the fourth preambular paragraph was designed to meet the views of many delegations, although he noted that many others attached a special sentiment to the word "condemns". The records of the United Nations showed that Saudi Arabia had been second to none in condemning colonialism, but the reference was out of place in the present context. To insist upon introducing the question of colonialism into every instrument approved by the Third Committee would vitiate the Committee's work.

Racial discrimination was indeed a by-product of colonialism, but also of many other factors. Moreover, colonialism being dead, it had no place in a document intended for the future. He would gladly
withdraw his amendments in favour of the original text, but he would not do so if the latter was to be replaced by lengthy quotations from an earlier instrument.

46. Mrs. ARIBOT (Guinea) said that the debate on the item under discussion had shown that all delegations were prepared to co-operate and to adapt their views to those of others; however, willingness to compromise on the question of anti-colonialism was quite another matter.

47. Mr. SOLODOVNIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) did not agree that colonialism was dead, for more than 30 million persons still suffered under it. Fascism had been killed at the end of the Second World War, but its roots were still alive.

48. Mr. BAROOY (Saudi Arabia) said that the remaining vestiges of colonialism could not be removed by pious declarations; they were being dealt with expeditiously by other United Nations organs. The entire draft Declaration would be thrown out of balance if two or three paragraphs were devoted to quotations relating to colonialism.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.