The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Division of Human Rights has the honour to append the final report of the First International Symposium on Penal Systems held in Havana, Cuba, from 19 to 24 November 1979.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba requests the Division of Human Rights to have this report distributed as an official document of the thirty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights under item 10 of the Commission's agenda: "Question of the human rights of all persons subjected to any form of detention or imprisonment".
A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Preparatory Committee for the First International Symposium on Penal Systems organized the Symposium in Havana with the aim of fostering an exchange of experiences among the bodies concerned with this question in the countries invited to send representatives.

2. The Symposium was held in Havana, Cuba, from 19 to 24 November 1979.

B. PARTICIPANTS

3. Representatives of the following countries took part in the Symposium: Algeria, Angola, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Jamaica, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Poland, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Viet Nam and People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen. The Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders was also represented. A number of guests also attended in a personal capacity.

4. A list of persons who attended the Symposium is appended.

C. OPENING OF THE SYMPOSIUM AND ELECTION OF THE OFFICERS

5. The Symposium was opened by Mr. Antonio Pérez Herrero, member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

6. The representatives of Algeria, the German Democratic Republic, Nicaragua and Viet Nam expressed best wishes for the success of the Symposium on behalf of the different geographical regions.

7. Mr. Enio Leyva Fuentes, Deputy Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Cuba, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Symposium.

8. Mr. Herad Benacoude, head of the Algerian delegation, was elected Vice-Chairman for Africa, Mr. Todor Dimitrov Ganchovski, head of the Bulgarian delegation, was elected Vice-Chairman for Europe, and Mr. Le Huu Qua, head of the Vietnamese delegation, was elected Vice-Chairman for Asia. All were elected by acclamation.

D. PROGRAMME

9. The Symposium programme included the following topics:

Main topic: Institutional treatment of prisoners and their reincorporation in society;

First subtopic: Political, scientific and technical training of prison officials;

Second subtopic: Organization and operation of scientific and technical institutions responsible for criminological research and the classification of prisoners.
E. DOCUMENTATION

10. Thirty position papers, prepared by the participating delegation and reproduced and distributed by the Preparatory Committee, were presented during the Symposium.

F. EXPRESSION OF THANKS TO THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

11. The participants expressed thanks to the Preparatory Committee for the hospitality extended to them and the facilities provided in order to make the Symposium a success.

G. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

12. The participants agreed that penal treatment should be based on respect for human dignity and oriented towards the social reeducation and rehabilitation of prisoners. It should, therefore, be implemented without any torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as proclaimed in article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They denounced the existence of penal systems based on terror, cruelty and inhumanity such as are to be found in colonialist, neo-colonialist and fascist regimes and regimes which practise racism and racial discrimination.


14. Some delegations stated that the economic difficulties inherent in the underdevelopment from which their countries were suffering, as a consequence of the colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and racial discrimination to which they had been subjected, had so far thwarted their efforts to go beyond the Standard Minimum Rules.

15. Several delegations emphasized the value of the extensive participation in their countries of the community and social and mass organizations in the treatment of prisoners in assisting and supervising prison activities and contributing, through their work with released prisoners, to their more rapid and complete reincorporation in society.

16. The representatives pointed out that proper prison treatment required a solid, harmonious legal basis which would make it possible to attain the very humane objectives of rehabilitation and reincorporation in society of persons who had broken the law and would encourage the participation of the various elements in society that should take an active part in the struggle against crime. They also considered it desirable that prison treatment should be based on effective education which would help prisoners to avoid the repetition of antisocial conduct. To that end prisoners should be incorporated in socially useful work and be given cultural and technical training and the possibility to practise sports and cultural and recreational activities within the context of an appropriate programme of incentives adapted to their behaviour during internment. It was also recommended that prison accommodation should be of
an appropriate standard and should permit the segregation of prisoners according to the classification system applied to them, together with an adequate level of security. It would be desirable for those prisoners who showed a constructive attitude in the course of prison treatment and who were seen to constitute less of a danger to society than formerly to be transferred to open centres where they could continue their rehabilitation process. The maintenance of relations between prisoners and their families and the rest of society was also deemed an important aspect of successful prison treatment.

17. The participants agreed on the need for scientific and technical training of prison personnel. They also placed great stress on the need to establish scientific and technical institutions to carry out studies, undertake criminological evaluations of prisoners and make suggestions and recommendations for treating them.

18. Using Symposium materials as a basis, the delegates considered that the prospects for improving penal systems were related to:

   Subsequent improvement of legislation concerning the execution of sentences, with respect to both the organization of sentences and the actual serving of sentences (guaranteeing the most rational combination of basic correctional and reeducational methods, taking into consideration both the prisoner's personality and the seriousness of the crime, etc.);

   Advanced political, technical and vocational training of cadres;

   Broader application of such sciences as sociology, psychology and education in the correction and rehabilitation of prisoners;

   More extensive participation of social and mass organizations in the work of rehabilitating prisoners;

   Subsequent development of scientific research on problems relating to the correction and rehabilitation of prisoners.

19. It was also agreed that after-care should be considered as a continuation of the rehabilitation work done in prisons.

20. Lastly, the participants expressed the view that periodic expert meetings to promote an exchange of experiences and co-operation in prison matters could contribute to the development and higher quality of work in this field.

21. Mr. Jorge Montero, Director of the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders also made a statement on the topic covered by the Symposium.
22. During the Symposium, special addresses were made by a number of Cuban authorities, including Mr. Sergio del Valle Jiménez, Minister of the Interior, Mr. Armando Torres Santrayll, Minister of Justice, Mr. Francisco Varona Duque de Estrada, Vice-President of the People's Supreme Court, and Mr. Santiago Cuba Fernández, Attorney-General of the Republic.

23. During the Symposium audiovisual materials concerning a number of aspects of the penal systems of Cuba, Mexico and Viet Nam were projected.

24. Mr. Blas Roca Calderío, President of the National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba, made the closing statement at the Symposium.
FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON PENAL SYSTEMS

Official list of participants and foreign guests

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Secretary of the Legislative Council of the Council of State and Director of the Institute of Jurisprudence of the Bulgarian Academy of Science

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Vice President of the Scientific Methodological Council for Prison Questions of the Ministry of the Interior

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