

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/1978/C.2/SR.15
27 April 1978

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

First regular session, 1978

SECOND (SOCIAL) COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 25 April 1978, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. EHSASSI (Iran)

CONTENTS

Human rights questions (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages, preferably in the same language as the text to which they refer. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also, if possible, incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room A-3550.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued) (E/1978/34, E/1978/14 and Add.1-6, E/1978/45, E/1978/21; E/1978/L.23, E/1978/C.2/L.3, L.4, L.5, L.6, L.7, L.23)

1. Mr. AZIZ (Afghanistan) said that a judge of the International Court of Justice had once written that human rights were expressions of moral claims and that the moral claims of today were often the legal rights of tomorrow. The collective conscience of the world had taken centuries to recognize the moral claims of the human person as inherent rights. The interest of the United Nations from its very inception in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and freedoms was in fact an expression of the concern of the international community to secure those rights. Industrial progress brought a transition from a minimal code of human rights to a more elaborate one. But progress should not obscure the meaning of those minimal rights, for to deny them implied that the whole world had achieved the same state of development. Development should not be allowed to become a pretext for despising the simple rights of the people of less developed societies, such as the right to a decent level of living and the right to development. Both simple and more elaborate rights were indivisible components of a whole. Just as none could be employed as an excuse to deny another, each should be respected in a manner conducive to promoting respect for the others.

2. His delegation commended the contribution of the Commission on Human Rights to the cause of promoting observance of human rights. Despite its heavy agenda, the Commission had achieved noteworthy progress in its work at its thirty-fourth session and had devoted attention to all items. However a five-week session had proved insufficient for thorough consideration of the agenda as a whole.

3. The violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories and in southern Africa was a grave threat to the current fragile tranquillity in the Middle East and Africa. One of the saddest social phenomena of modern times was the persistence of racial discrimination in some parts of the world. Nowhere more than in South Africa were racism and domination of human beings on grounds of race and colour so abject. Racial discrimination consisted, among other things, of a set of popular beliefs which included the ideas that differences between groups were due to heredity and that nothing could change them, that habits, attitudes and behaviour were determined before birth, that all differences between the dominant and the non-dominant group were examples of inferiority in the latter, and that if there should be biological crossing of the groups, the children would be degenerate. Those racist beliefs, although proved erroneous, continued to be an important cause of racial prejudice. His delegation, like many others, strongly condemned such policies based on a superiority complex. His delegation fully supported the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia and the decisions of the World Conference for Action against Apartheid. Assistance to the racist régimes of southern Africa was detrimental to the enjoyment of human rights by the indigenous population of that region. Although the imposition of

/...

(Mr. Aziz, Afghanistan)

an arms embargo by the Security Council was considered a further positive step by the United Nations to suppress the policy of apartheid, the effectiveness of the embargo was being obstructed by the fact that the Vorster régime had become self-sufficient in producing enough arms to continue its abhorrent policies of apartheid. Complete economic sanctions, in addition to the arms embargo, were essential if real action has to be taken against racial discrimination.

4. Self-determination was a basic human right and a prerequisite for the exercise of other human rights. It was no coincidence that the Charter, the Covenant and other instruments gave a high place to the right of self-determination; they did so because the United Nations had taken upon itself, as Article 73 (b) of the Charter indicated, the duty "to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of free political institutions". It was sad that the peoples of Palestine, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe were being denied their fundamental right of self-determination. He hoped that efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement in southern Africa and to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East would lead to the enjoyment by the peoples of those regions of their right to self-determination. His delegation renewed its pledge of full support to the cause of the Palestinian people and remained of the opinion that there could be no just and lasting peace in the Middle East unless the rights of the Palestinians, including the right to return to their homeland and to establish a Palestinian State there, were ensured.

5. The programme of advisory services played a major role in the dissemination of information about human rights. Expansion of that programme would certainly help to promote a better understanding of matters relating to such rights, and every effort should be made to prevent any reduction in the funds allocated to that programme. His delegation therefore fully supported the adoption of draft resolution I, recommended by the Commission. It also supported the proposed increase in the membership of the Commission on Human Rights, to reflect the growth in United Nations membership since 1967 and the interest expressed by many delegations in participating in the Commission's work.

6. His delegation was not in a position to make any substantive remarks relating to the draft convention on the rights of the child proposed by the Polish delegation, but shared its view that children should be given opportunities and facilities, by a legally binding instrument, to enable them to develop physically, mentally, morally and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in freedom and dignity.

7. Miss LFRAT (Observer for Israel) said that her delegation attached great importance to the item under consideration. Both in the Council and elsewhere, Israel had always insisted on universal respect for human rights, in accordance with Articles 55 and 56 of the United Nations Charter. The principle of universality, which was stressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was fundamental and had to be rigorously applied. In that regard, Israel believed

(Miss Mfrat, Observer, Israel)

some progress had been made at the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights. Several countries whose human rights violations had previously avoided scrutiny had been discussed, although in closed meetings. Perhaps most significantly, a resolution had actually been passed in a public meeting concerning Democratic Kampuchea. That development had been noted with particular satisfaction by her delegation, since Israel had been the first country to raise the question of human rights violations in Democratic Kampuchea before the United Nations. Her delegation hoped that both the Commission and the Council would continue to move towards ever-increasing universality, so that violations of human rights would be given the most rigorous scrutiny whenever and wherever they occurred.

8. Her delegation welcomed other proposals and suggestions to improve the human rights machinery, but felt that they were only the first steps towards further development. Much remained to be done. One subject of special importance to her delegation and which was awaiting consideration by the Commission was the status of Jews in Syria and in the Soviet Union. In both countries, gross violations of human rights as defined by the Universal Declaration occurred daily with respect to the Jewish communities. By preventing Jews from emigrating, Syria was in violation of article 13 (2) of the Universal Declaration. The plight of Jews in the Soviet Union was well known. Her delegation had made repeated public appeals in the Council to the Soviet Union to allow the Jews living there to establish themselves as free people living in dignity in a country of their own free choice. Despite all those appeals, there had been no move by the Soviet Government. Her delegation therefore repeated its appeal that those who so wished be allowed to be united with their families.

9. With regard to the Middle East, the Commission on Human Rights had once again concocted a resolution which was a veritable tissue of lies and distortion. She would not enter into a detailed refutation of that calumny, because her delegation had done so in the past and because the truth could be ascertained by any impartial visitor to the area.

10. If delegates such as the representative of Iraq chose to take stands against Israel, they should be aware that many delegations present were pointedly familiar with a recent report by Amnesty International and the International League for the Rights of Man which presented shocking evidence of the executions, torture, ill-treatment, mass deportations, and detention in concentration camps to which Iraq's Kurdish population was subjected. That evidence was abundantly available in official United Nations documents, such as those of the Sub-Committee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and required no further elaboration.

11. Mr. BELYAEV (Observer for the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his country attached great importance to international co-operation in the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and had signed and ratified the most important international instruments on the subject. In fact, its internal legislation, and especially its new Constitution, guaranteed even more extensive rights than did those instruments.

(Mr. Belyaev, Observer,
Byelorussian SSR)

12. The effectiveness of efforts to ensure human rights and freedoms depended on how consistently United Nations Members themselves worked for fuller compliance with the obligations laid down in the Charter, and the extent to which their domestic and foreign policies matched those obligations. Time had shown that international co-operation in human rights questions could be effective only when conducted in the context of détente and served to promote trust between States and peoples.

13. The Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights had made a useful contribution to the elaboration of measures to eliminate violations of human rights which continued to recur in connexion with the policy and practice of colonialism, racism, apartheid, aggression, foreign occupation and oppression, and the Commission had urged all States which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, so as to make it an even more effective international instrument in the struggle to eradicate that particular evil. Among the most important actions of the Commission was the recommendation contained in draft decision 3, paragraph (b). The struggle against the continuing policy and practice of racism and apartheid must be given priority attention in United Nations work on human rights.

14. The Commission had also rightly condemned the mass violations of human rights which continued to take place in the Israeli-occupied Arab territories and in Chile, and his country supported the specific demands contained in the Commission's decisions relating to those areas and to southern Africa. The human rights situation in the Middle East, in particular, had been further aggravated by Israel's recent armed aggression against Lebanon, which was tantamount to a policy of genocide. In Chile, no amount of propaganda could deceive world public opinion regarding the Junta's continuing policy of brutal repression and its contemptuous treatment of the United Nations and its representatives. The more insistent and energetic the efforts of the international community to put an end to repression and persecution in Chile and to restore the human rights of the Chilean people, the sooner that noble goal would be achieved.

15. Human rights could be secured only within the context of international peace and security, and the Commission had therefore quite rightly condemned the attempts by certain States to abuse science and technology in order to create new and deadlier means of mass destruction, such as the neutron bomb, which must be condemned as a threat to the most basic human right, the right to live in peace and security. The United States, the country planning to manufacture that bomb, was the very country that had pursued a policy of genocide against its own Indian population and against its own fighters for civil rights.

16. Among the most important decisions taken by the Commission, which his country supported, he wished to single out resolution 2 (XXXIV), 3 (XXXIV), 7 (XXXIV) and 26 (XXXIV). Not all questions taken up by the Commission were of equal importance, however, and his delegation hoped that the Commission's consideration of its programme and methods of work would increase its effectiveness in performing its tasks. The Commission should concentrate on formulating measures for increasing the effectiveness of existing United Nations organs rather than creating artificial

(Mr. Belyaev, Observer,
Byelorussian SSR)

new ones, and it should be guided in that connexion by General Assembly resolution 32/130.

17. Turning to the financial implications of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission at its thirty-fourth session, he said that the table in annex 3 of the Commission's report (E/1978/34) had, to say the least, surprised his delegation, which, on reading draft resolution I concerning advisory services in the field of human rights, had been sadly disappointed by its ambitious wording and financial implications. His delegation realized that a heavy programme of work had prevented the Commission from paying proper attention to the problem, but felt that the implementation of basically good decisions should not be jeopardized because those decisions had been taken without regard for certain policy decisions of the Council and the General Assembly and even conflicted with them. He drew attention in that connexion to the comments and recommendations in paragraphs 24 to 26 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of its seventeenth session (A/32/38). In the light of those recommendations, the General Assembly had approved the allocation of \$7,577,700 for the human rights programme for the biennium, or approximately \$3,780,000 for 1978. And now a further request was being made for the sum of \$715,275, for 1978 alone, representing an increase of 19 per cent over the General Assembly's allocation. His delegation felt there had been an unfortunate misunderstanding and some dangerous improvisation on the part of those who had prepared the data. It hoped that the competent bodies would make the necessary arithmetical corrections.

18. Paragraphs 1 to 3 of General Assembly resolution 32/206 clearly showed that the recommendation contained in operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution I of the Commission was wrong and unjustified. The same was true of draft resolution VI. The implications of the recommendations had to be examined in terms of the priorities for the period 1978-1979, and his delegation therefore hoped that the necessary amendments would be made to the Commission's draft resolutions.

19. Mr. LEPRETTE (France) said that his delegation had taken part in the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights, whose work had been a mixture of encouraging and disturbing elements. The quality of the work of the session had been generally satisfactory, polemics had been limited, and the Commission had endeavoured to pinpoint the problems, to avoid digression and to proceed methodically. The outcome of the session showed that, as his delegation had ardently wished, the Commission had somewhat enlarged its horizons. He regretted the major contradiction in the work of the Commission between the universality of the human rights principles it upheld and the selectivity it practised in applying them. In human rights matters it was necessary to avoid a double standard. The Commission should not limit itself to a few recurrent cases, which, although particularly serious, did not justify neglecting other acute cases. The thirty-fourth session of the Commission had made some headway in that regard. Under the procedure established by Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) the Commission had considered a number of alleged violations by some 10 countries, which were mentioned in paragraph 208 of the Commission's report (E/1978/34). Other situations had been considered in open meetings. His delegation welcomed the fact that, for the first time, an effective and honest, albeit limited, application had been made of a

/...

(Mr. Leprette, France)

procedure providing well-defined rules for inquiry, with guarantees of discretion, objectivity and impartiality for all parties.

20. He noted that the Commission had further endeavoured to expand its horizons in the area of legal reflection and more thorough consideration of the principles on which its work was based. Thus, under item 9 of its agenda, it had endeavoured to define the right of self-determination more clearly. His delegation deemed that right to be directly linked to the concept of popular sovereignty and democratic legitimacy, which obviously presupposed a free and individual vote, enabling each citizen to exercise his self-determination. Each person's right of information, association, expression, participation and self-determination was the foundation; the self-determination of peoples was a superstructure. He wished to emphasize, as had the French delegation to the Commission, that all human rights were in fact different aspects of a single principle: the right of each citizen to self-determination. Violations of human rights always revealed some form of contempt for the self-determination of the individual. Torture; inhuman, cruel or degrading treatment; abuses of science and technology; the position of conscientious objectors; intolerance; discrimination based on religion or belief; the common denominator in all of those problems was the refusal to recognize the rights of others to decide their own fate on the basis of fully equal opportunities. Thus, it was always the right of self-determination which was in some sense seriously infringed. He warned against the restrictive interpretation that the right of self-determination applied only to the birth of a nation; it applied throughout the life of the individual and each people. For his delegation, when the Council approached such questions as the status and role of non-governmental organizations, aspects of the co-operative movement, or the exercise of trade union freedoms in the framework of the implementation of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, what was fundamentally at stake in each case was the individual's right to self-determination. Under a liberal, pluralistic system of alternating majorities, self-determination was a continuous process. A few weeks previously, his country had once again demonstrated its faith in the exercise of self-determination by enabling each citizen to choose freely his institutions and his future.

21. The same principle governed his country's foreign policy. Thus, the French representative on the Commission on Human Rights had stressed that the sole basis for the solution for the problem of southern Africa should be the democratic principle of "one man, one vote". That voluntarist philosophy, under which men, like States, were bound only by what they had freely accepted, was an instrument of concord and good faith; it was, in any event, the best guarantee against totalitarian temptations.

22. Another respect in which the Commission had avoided improvisation and polemics was the far-reaching exchanges of views which had taken place in plenary meetings and in the working group with a view to seeking means to encourage and develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the question of the programme and methods of work of the Commission. In order to discharge its mandate

(Mr. Leprette, France)

under General Assembly resolution 32/130, the Commission had considered such means as restructuring the Commission, increasing the number and duration of its sessions, changing its status and improving its budget allocations.

23. The Commission had discussed the role of the proposed High Commissioner for Human Rights and the advisability of creating such a post. It had given renewed impetus to the idea of creating, where they did not yet exist, regional and national commissions for the promotion of human rights. An interesting discussion had taken place on the problem of procedures to consider alleged human rights violations, and especially concerning the existence in the Commission of both public and confidential procedures.

24. On another aspect of the Commission's work, his delegation attached the greatest importance to ensuring recognition of the right of each person effectively to appeal to the competent national authorities against acts violating his fundamental rights.

25. Discussions in the Commission had stressed the difficulty of reconciling two contradictory principles governing its relations between Member States within the United Nations: on the one hand, intervention by the international community pursuant to conventional rules or Charter provisions; on the other hand, non-interference and respect for the sovereignty of States.

26. His delegation found cause for satisfaction and hope in the fact that the Commission's debate had been constructive and responsible, but was concerned that, of the many questions broached, very few had been resolved. Perhaps those questions were not ripe for solution and it was wise to allow further time for reflection. However, his delegation had some misgivings in noting that the Commission had instructed working groups, which would have very little time, to resolve, before its next session, major questions which it had been unable to resolve in a five-week session. However, his country would endeavour to contribute to that work.

27. With regard to the Middle East, his delegation had expressed concern at the acts committed in that region. The question had taken a new turn with the events in southern Lebanon. His country participated in the interim force and thus supported United Nations efforts to help restore the authority of the Lebanese Government over its territory. France had repeatedly expressed the importance it attached to strict observation of the Geneva Conventions. It was opposed in principle to the acquisition of territory by war. It deplored the loss of innocent lives among the non-combatant population and favoured a negotiated over-all settlement among all the parties based on the relevant United Nations resolutions.

28. With regard to southern Africa, his country was taking part in negotiations aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the grave problems of the region. His delegation had always expressed its unqualified condemnation of apartheid, which was an institutionalized form of racism, and had denounced it as injurious to human dignity. His delegation at Geneva had stressed that the basis for any solution had to include the principle of democratic self-determination, "one man, one vote".

(Mr. Lequette, France)

29. With regard to Chile, the French Government had always associated itself with the deep concern expressed by world opinion and deplored the slowness with which the return to a normal situation was taking place. It was true that signs of improvement had been noted, especially the adoption of amnesty measures and a modification of the state of siege. It was necessary to escape from the current impasse created by the refusal of Chile to admit the Ad Hoc Working Group established by the Commission. His delegation appealed for efforts to overcome the current difficulties. The time had come to reconsider inflexible positions of principle and overcome personal considerations, legitimate though they might be, in the interests of the victims.

30. During recent years, three broad movements had gained prominence: the rejection of discrimination; the rejection of subjugation; and the aspiration to social justice. With regard to the first, which held pride of place in the report of the Commission and in the work of the current session of the Council, action against discrimination had proceeded to the stage of implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Two years previously, attention had been focused on eliminating discrimination against physically and mentally handicapped persons. Consideration had also been given to the case of the elderly. The Council had dealt with a Draft Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Commission had taken up the draft general principles on equality and non-discrimination in respect of persons born out of wedlock and a body of principles concerning the treatment of persons under any form of detention or imprisonment.

31. The rejection of subjugation included a revolt, first of all, against physical subjection, with the rejection of slavery and its insidious forms of alienation, such as prostitution or drug addiction, not to mention the exploitation of workers by illicit or clandestine trafficking. Rejection of political alienation, especially all foreign domination, also included rejection of ideological conditioning and all techniques and structures which deprived citizens of genuine participation. The revolt against subjection also involved rejection of violence done to the mind and of mental conditioning and the condemnation of torture, including such subtle forms as "brainwashing" and "re-education camps" and, more generally, all cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The International Covenants on Human Rights had also embodied the rejection of economic servitude by formulating the right of peoples freely to take full advantage of their wealth and natural resources.

32. With regard to aspirations to social justice, a new phase had made it possible to place on an equal footing with civil and political rights the economic and social rights which aimed at satisfying the basic needs of the individual and at securing for him a level of living which, going beyond simple subsistence, satisfied his aspirations to security, health and education. The standard-setting work of the Council had grown stronger and its commissions were endeavouring to embody universal aspirations in international instruments. There was a parallel tendency to hold major world conferences every year, e.g., on women's rights, on apartheid, on racism. As the principal organ of the United Nations in the economic, social and humanitarian sphere, the Council was the most appropriate body to deal with those two types of activity.

/...

(Mr. Leurette, France)

33. At a time when the Council was considering the possibility of holding special sessions devoted to specific topics, his delegation wished to stress the specific character of the work of the Commission on Human Rights, the most prominent of the Council's commissions, which was the sole forum where those whose human dignity and fundamental freedoms had been infringed could voice their complaints in accordance with well-defined procedures. On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, his delegation wished to pay tribute to the Commission on Human Rights which, in the course of three decades, had contributed to promoting the principles and ensuring respect for the rights embodied in that Declaration.

34. Ms. HUANG Kuo (China) recalled that, at its latest session, the Commission on Human Rights had adopted positive resolutions on the questions of the basic rights of Arabs and Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories, national independence and the liberation of peoples in southern Africa and other regions under colonial rule and foreign domination, and racism, racial discrimination and apartheid.

35. Turning to the report of the Commission (E/1978/34), she said that paragraph 213 was not in keeping with the facts. When an imperialist war of aggression was going on in Kampuchea and thousands of Cambodians were being massacred and the economy was being destroyed, no one had said anything about human rights. Now, however, just as the people were building an independent, peaceful and neutral fatherland, certain persons had chosen to raise the so-called human rights question even though they were not qualified to do so. Her delegation could accept neither the premises of decision 9 (XXXIV) of the Commission nor its substance. The United States representative in his statement at the 15th meeting had again unreasonably vilified Democratic Kampuchea, going so far as to state that it violated human rights. It had been the United States imperialists who had savagely massacred the Cambodian people; they were the ones who should be condemned.

36. Mrs. FLOREZ PRIDA (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the United States representative in mentioning Cuba in his statement at the previous meeting had done so without knowing the facts. Cuba had stated, at the thirty-fourth session of the Commission, that it had no political prisoners and that no one was imprisoned for his political beliefs but only for his counter-revolutionary activities. Since the 1959 revolution, the United States had encouraged, protected and financed armed operations against Cuba, been involved in plans to assassinate Cuban leaders and had imposed an economic blockade against that country. Finally, she recalled that there were political prisoners in the United States, Puerto Ricans who had been jailed for having fought for their independence. The United States representative had found it convenient not to mention that fact.

37. Mr. HUSSEIN (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Zionist representative had insulted the Arab countries by mentioning facts born of her own imagination. Israel's invasion of Lebanon had caused thousands of casualties and untold destruction, and the Israeli representative tried to divert

(Mr. Hussein, Iraq)

attention from established facts. The Arab people had a cause for which it would continue to live and die. If the present generation was unable to cope with Israeli aggression, the victory of the Palestinian people would be left to a future generation.

38. Mr. FIGUEROA (Argentina), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was interesting to note that all the references to human rights situations made by the United States representative related to developing countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. That clearly showed the selectivity of his judgement. Argentina had thoroughly investigated the allegations it had received under the procedures outlined in Economic and Social Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) and its answer had been considered by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The situation in his country had improved gradually, particularly in recent months. Accordingly, he did not understand why the United States representative had said what he had. His Government remained firmly convinced of the need for international co-operation on human rights pursuant to the Charter and was ready to support international efforts to that end. It would not accept political pressure from countries that, no matter what they said, applied a double standard, apportioning criticism and praise on the basis of their political, domestic and strategic interests.

39. Mr. AL-HUSSAINY (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Israeli representative had chosen to speak of Kampuchea and the Jewish population of Syria while conveniently ignoring the report of the Commission on Human Rights and particularly resolution 1 (XXXIV) concerning Israel's violations of human rights in the occupied Arab territories. As for the Jews in Syria, they were citizens and were treated as such. As to respect for their right to return to their country, the fact was that they were Syrians and had no other country.

40. Mr. EDIS (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had initiated decision 9 (XXXIV) because of the general concern of British public opinion at the horrifying reports of human rights violations there. The decision did not prejudge that situation but merely called for comments.

41. Ms. MATTESON (United States of America), replying to the representatives of Cuba and Argentina, recalled that the United States representative at the previous meeting had only listed cases on record as having been brought before the Commission on Human Rights. In reply to the representative of Cuba, she said that her delegation had already replied to the arguments concerning Puerto Rico, which had been repeated over a period of 10 years. Her delegation reserved its right to reply at a later date to the statement of the representative of China.

42. Mr. WORKU (Observer for Ethiopia) said that the United States representative at the previous meeting had presumed to accuse his country of violating human rights which the United States did not respect. His country was undergoing fundamental and basic changes in its life precisely in order to make human rights available to the majority of its people. It was ironic that when thousands of Ethiopians were dying of hunger, the United States had uttered no word about the

Mr. Worku, Observer, Ethiopia

denial of the most basic human right, the right to live. It only expressed concern when his country was trying to correct that situation. He could not agree that a situation in which 1 per cent of the population exploited the other 99 per cent was consistent with the observance of human rights.

43. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that five draft resolutions had been submitted during the discussion of the item.

44. Mr. HERZEL (Federal Republic of Germany), introducing draft resolution E/1978/C.2/L.3, said that its purpose was to avoid duplication in the reporting system. It simply extended the exemption enjoyed by States Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to States Parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

45. Mr. AYEHI (Nigeria), introducing draft resolution E/1973/C.2/L.4, on behalf of the delegations of Egypt and Sudan as well as his own, drew attention to paragraphs 2 and 3. He recommended that it should be adopted by consensus.

46. Mr. ABDALLAH (Tunisia) said that his delegation wished to join the sponsors of draft resolutions E/1978/C.2/L.4 and L.5.

47. Mr. KPOTSA (Togo) said that his delegation wished to joint the sponsors of draft resolution E/1978/C.2/L.4.

48. Mr. HABYARIYAMA (Rwanda) said that his delegation wished to join the sponsors of draft resolution E/1978/C.2/L.5.

49. Mrs. SEIICHI (Algeria), introducing draft resolution E/1978/C.2/L.5 on behalf of the delegations of Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Romania, Rwanda, Tunisia and Yugoslavia, as well as her own, said that the question of migrant workers was of concern to many countries, particularly the countries of origin. Although some efforts had been made to guarantee certain rights to migrant workers, those measures were inadequate.

50. Recalling that the General Assembly, in resolution 32/120, had recognized the need for in-depth consideration of the question of migrant workers by various bodies, she said that the sponsors believed that in order to undertake that study there must be a consolidated report on the subject. She drew attention to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the draft resolution. In the second line of paragraph 3 after the words "at Geneva" the words "for not more than one week" should be added. Paragraph 4 stressed the co-ordinating role of the Economic and Social Council. Finally, she expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously.

51. Mr. FIGUEROA (Argentina), introducing draft resolution E/1978/C.2/L.6 on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, the Central African Empire and the Philippines as well as his own, said that the interest of Member States in participating in the work of the Commission on Human Rights had been demonstrated by the fact that the number of candidates exceeded the number of vacancies on the

(Mr. Figueroa, Argentina)

Commission. Membership in the Commission was especially important to the developing countries as the Commission at its next session would undertake a task that would project into the future. Small delegations were not able to participate in all the working groups and that led to an unequal representation of the regional groups in the discussion. It would be very helpful if the Council could ease matters by deciding on the question of enlargement without delay. The figure suggested, namely 43 seats, would represent an increase of 11, which was the same number by which the Commission had been enlarged previously; however, the sponsors were flexible as to the precise number. Obviously, the Commission could not have more members than the Council, of which it was a subsidiary organ. He pointed out that the regional groups had not yet agreed on how the seats should be allocated among them.

52. Although the sponsors realized the Council was dealing with the question of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, consultations had demonstrated that the Commission was perhaps the only body whose elimination had not been considered. As all resolutions of the Council at that session were being adopted subject to the proviso that they did not prejudice the recommendations concerning restructuring, the sponsors had no objections to accepting that proviso, although it was their understanding that they would be serving the restructuring exercise by helping to rationalize a subsidiary organ without changing its place in the United Nations system. Finally, he drew attention to paragraph 2, according to which elections to the new vacancies that would be created would be in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. It was essential that the Commission should reflect the composition of the United Nations as a whole.

53. Ms. MARTINEZ (Jamaica), introducing draft resolution E/1978/C.2/L.7 on behalf of the delegations of Italy and Sweden as well as her own, said that the proposals it contained were merely procedural. Moreover, they appeared to have wide support. Her delegation would be pleased if it could be adopted by consensus.

54. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the deadline for submission of draft resolutions under agenda item 11 had passed the previous day. However, one delegation informed him that it wished to submit a draft resolution on that item. If the Committee agreed, he could accede to that request, and if he heard no objection he would take it that the Committee did in fact agree.

55. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.