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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 27 May 1988, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (E/1988/90 and Add.1)

Draft decision IV (E/1988/90)

Mr. DE CLERCK, speaking in explanation of vote before the vote on draft decision IV, praised the efforts that had been made to improve the status of women in the Secretariat by the Secretary-General and the Co-ordinator appointed for that purpose. Efficiency had been much discussed during the past year, particularly in the Council, and it was in a spirit of efficiency that the Co-ordinator's plan of action, approved by the General Assembly at its forty-second session, was currently being implemented. Draft decision IV, however, ran counter to the resolution adopted by the Assembly; consequently, his delegation would abstain in the vote on it.

Ms. NIEMANN (Canada) said that her delegation fully agreed with the view expressed by the Legal Counsel at the 15th meeting that adoption of draft decision IV did not conflict with General Assembly resolution 42/220 C. Moreover, as paragraph 2 of that resolution invited the Secretary-General to "review the situation at the end of the six-month period", i.e. in June 1988, she had been surprised to learn that the review had already been concluded. That resolution also directed the Secretary-General to take into account the views expressed by Member States during the forty-second session of the General Assembly, many of which had supported the continuation of the Co-ordinator's mandate for the duration of the current biennium. The Secretary-General was also to take into account the views of other relevant intergovernmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women. In fact, the draft decision now before the Council had been adopted by the Commission after having been sponsored by some 20 delegations representing all regional groups. Moreover, the Second (Social) Committee of the Council had also recommended by consensus that the draft decision be adopted by the Council in plenary meeting. During the Committee's deliberations, no Member State

(Ms. Niemann, Canada)

had expressed any difficulty with the draft decision; she was therefore surprised at the difficulties now being raised by delegations.

As her delegation expected that the Secretary-General would take the views of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Second (Social) Committee of the Council into account when he reviewed the situation in June 1988, it would vote in favour of draft decision IV.

Mr. MOHAMED (Somalia) said it was obvious that no consensus existed on draft decision IV.

He was also somewhat concerned at the statement made by the Controller at the 15th meeting that the Co-ordinator's post was being funded from resources generated within the Secretariat, since many United Nations activities to which the African States accorded priority were being curtailed precisely for lack of resources.

It was unfortunate that the Council was obliged to vote on the issue of the status of women in the Secretariat, particularly since it had been pointed out that the Office of Human Resources Management could deal with the matter effectively. His delegation would abstain in the vote on the draft decision.

Mr. KHODAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the German Democratic Republic and Poland, said that those delegations shared the doubts expressed by many other delegations. Taking into account the statement by the Controller that extension of the mandate of the Co-ordinator was unjustified and unnecessary, and bearing in mind the opinion expressed by the Legal Counsel, the delegations on whose behalf he was speaking intended to abstain in the vote on draft decision IV.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision IV.

In favour: Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Greece, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Belgium, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, China, Djibouti, Egypt, France, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Guinea, India, Jamaica,

Japan, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Zaire.

Draft decision IV was adopted by 18 votes to none, with 31 abstentions.

Mr. STUART (Australia), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's identification of the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat as a priority for the current biennium. Since the identification of priorities was an essential step in the process of budgetary reform, his delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision. Having noted the advice of the Legal Counsel, his delegation believed that the Council's decision should be taken into consideration by the Secretary-General following the review called for in General Assembly resolution 42/220 C.

The PRESIDENT drew attention to the draft decision entitled "Enlargement of the Commission on the Status of Women" contained in paragraph 12 of document E/1988/90/Add.1.

The draft decision contained in paragraph 12 of document E/1988/90/Add.1 was adopted.

Mr. BEN HAMIDA (Observer for Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the Group had supported the idea of expanding the membership of the Commission on the Status of Women for several years, given the increase in the number of States Members of the United Nations and the need to deal more effectively and in a more comprehensive manner with issues relating to women, particularly in the developing countries. Consequently, the Group had consistently supported Economic and Social Council decision 1987/23, which had been adopted by consensus and acknowledged the need for such an expansion.

Any enlargement of the Commission must respect the principle of equitable geographical distribution. That issue must be settled by the Economic and Social Council no later than early 1990, as the Council was the only forum with the authority under the Charter to do so. Any decision taken, however, must not deviate from the Council's rules of procedure, nor could any exceptions be made or unjustified pre-conditions set. For its part, the Group of 77 would spare no

(Mr. Ben Hamida, Observer, Tunisia)

effort in promoting a consensus on that subject. In that connection, the consultations referred to in paragraph 3 of the decision just adopted would be highly useful in affording a practical follow-up to the decision. Those consultations should be held when appropriate - for example, during the forthcoming session of the General Assembly or at the Council's organizational session for 1989. The Group of 77 was prepared to play an active part in those consultations.

In view of the foregoing considerations, the Group of 77 had joined in the consensus on the draft decision.

Mr. FAROUQE (Sri Lanka), said that, had his delegation been present at the time of voting, it would have abstained.

HUMAN RIGHTS (E/1988/12 and Corr.1; E/1988/89/Add.1)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider part II of the report of the Second (Social) Committee, contained in document E/1988/89/Add.1. The texts of the draft proposals recommended by the Commission on Human Rights for adoption by the Council, and adopted by the Second Committee without amendment, were contained in the report of the Commission's forty-fourth session (E/1988/12 and Corr.1).

Mr. GVIR (Observer for Israel) recalled the position taken by Israel at the forty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights. Once again, unfounded criticism was being levelled at Israel by countries which violated the most basic human rights and freedoms.

The biased and distorted accusations in Commission resolutions 1988/1 A and B, 1988/2 and 1988/3 reflected the exploitation of the United Nations by certain Arab delegations. The Organization's indiscriminate condemnation of Israel contrasted with its failure to review human rights abuses in the region's non-democratic countries. Such a politicized approach hurt its image more than it did Israel. The Economic and Social Council must restore balance and fairness to its investigations into human rights abuses.

At a time of increasing attempts to distort, deny and even dismiss the Holocaust, the Commission was to be praised for having adopted resolution 1988/47 on the prosecution and punishment of all war criminals and persons who have committed crimes against humanity.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the draft resolutions recommended by the Second (Social) Committee in paragraph 63 of its report.

Draft resolutions I and II were adopted.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider draft resolution III, entitled "Report of the Working Group on Slavery of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities".

Mr. GALAL (Egypt) said that the Group of 77 had concluded that the name of the Working Group did not accurately reflect its task, which was to work for the abolition of slavery.

The PRESIDENT noted that, in paragraph 1 of its resolution 1988/42, the Commission on Human Rights had endorsed the recommendation of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities that the name of the Working Group on Slavery should be changed to the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

Mr. NYAMEKE (Centre for Human Rights) explained that the change in the name of the Working Group had been intended to reflect the nature of the issues it currently dealt with. As slavery in the traditional sense had been abolished under various international instruments, the Working Group currently dealt with such slavery-like practices as apartheid, child prostitution and child labour.

Mr. GALAL (Egypt) said that, while he was aware that the name of the Working Group had been changed, he nevertheless believed that it ought to be modified further to reflect the Working Group's task of combating or abolishing contemporary forms of slavery.

Mr. TROUVEROY (Belgium) said that, while he could appreciate the legitimate concerns of the Egyptian and other delegations, the situation was a complex one. He proposed that those concerns should be conveyed to the Working Group, to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and to the Commission on Human Rights so that they might take whatever action they deemed appropriate.

Mr. GALAL (Egypt), replying to a question from the President, said that the course of action proposed by the representative of Belgium was acceptable to him.

Draft resolution III was adopted.

Draft resolutions IV to XII (E/1988/89/Add.1)

Draft resolutions IV to XII were adopted.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the draft decisions contained in chapter I, section B, of document E/1988/12 and Add.1 and recommended by the Second (Social) Committee in paragraph 64 of its report.

Draft decision 1 (E/1988/12)

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 1.

In favour: Belize, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, China, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mozambique, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Against: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Oman.

Draft decision 1 was adopted by 39 votes to 13, with 2 abstentions.

Mr. STUART (Australia), speaking in explanation of vote, said that, at the forty-third session of the Commission on Human Rights, his delegation had opposed the decision to appoint a special rapporteur on the use of mercenaries, on the grounds that it represented a duplication of effort and a waste of scarce United Nations resources which could better be used to support the Ad Hoc Committee on the Drafting of an International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries. Australia still opposed that decision and had therefore abstained in the vote on draft decision 1.

Mr. AL-ZADGALI (Oman) said that his delegation had abstained because the question of the use of mercenaries had already been taken up in the Sixth Committee. Oman did not wish to see duplication in the work of United Nations bodies, especially in view of the Organization's financial crisis.

Draft decision 2 (E/1988/12)

Mrs. COLL (Ireland), speaking in explanation of vote, said that the background and purpose of draft decision 2 were unlike those of any other decision adopted by the Economic and Social Council. There had been no dialogue between the Commission on Human Rights and Albania and, as a result, the material contained in the dossier before the Commission had remained unclarified. Thus, the circumstances which in other instances had permitted the Commission to register sufficient improvement in the human rights situation for a case to be discontinued, were absent. Her delegation had supported Commission resolution 1988/17, which recommended to the Council that the confidential material concerning Albania which had been before the Commission under Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) should no longer be restricted. Ireland would vote in favour of draft decision 2 and urged delegations which valued the credibility of the procedure established under Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) to do likewise.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 2.

In favour: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against: Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, China, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mozambique, Pakistan, Poland, Syrian Arab Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Yugoslavia.

Abstaining: Belize, Colombia, Djibouti, Egypt, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, India, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lesotho, Liberia, Oman, Panama, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zaire.

Draft decision 2 was rejected by 13 votes to 11, with 29 abstentions.

Draft decisions 3 to 13 (E/1988/12)

Draft decisions 3 to 13 were adopted.

Draft decision 14 (E/1988/12)

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 14.

In favour: Australia, Belgium, Belize, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lesotho, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Against: Cuba, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Oman, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic.

Abstaining: China, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Guinea, India, Liberia, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Draft Decision 14 was adopted by 24 votes to 6, with 15 abstentions.

Mr. MADARSHAH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in explanation of vote, regretted that purely political considerations had once again dominated the Council's decision on the so-called "Human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran". The Islamic Republic of Iran had made constructive proposals to the United Nations with a view to depoliticizing the issue. However, certain quarters had chosen to ignore those proposals and had decided to base their resolutions on self-made, self-publicized and self-serving allegations. His delegation totally rejected Commission on Human Rights resolution 1988/69 and would never accept any process based on political considerations.

Draft decisions 15 to 18 (E/1988/12)

Draft decisions 15 to 18 were adopted.

Draft decision 19 (E/1988/12/Corr.1)

Draft decision 19 was adopted.

Draft decision XIX (E/1988/89/Add.1)

Mr. THIOUNN PRASITH (Observer for Democratic Kampuchea) said that the adoption by the Council of draft decision XIX would help to reverse what Hanoi had labelled an "irreversible" situation in Kampuchea. Viet Nam's pursuit of Ho Chi Minh's idea of an Indochinese Federation had brought that country to a situation of famine, forcing it to seek assistance from the international community. As Prince Norodom Sihanouk, President of Democratic Kampuchea, had said recently, Viet Nam would never solve its internal problems until it ended its attempts to subjugate the Khmer people. Prince Sihanouk had also urged countries

(Mr. Thiounn Prasith, Observer,
Democratic Kampuchea)

to withhold assistance from Viet Nam until it implemented United Nations resolutions on Kampuchea.

In the 10 years that Viet Nam had been flouting General Assembly resolutions, its position had weakened steadily. Still, it clung desperately to its expansionist policy, misrepresenting the problem of Kampuchea as one of civil war. Continued occupation of Kampuchea was the real goal of Vietnamese proposals for "negotiations among Khmers", i.e. between the puppet régime in Phnom Penh and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. Despite Viet Nam's worn-out promises to withdraw its troops, battle still raged in Kampuchea and Soviet military assistance continued to pour in. The puppet régime in Phnom Penh was weakening under attacks from Coalition Government forces and Viet Nam was obviously keeping its troops in Kampuchea for fear that, without them, the régime would collapse altogether.

Hanoi must choose between a negotiated political settlement with the Coalition Government headed by Prince Sihanouk, or the continued isolation and impoverishment of its country. The Soviet Union, for its part, could do much to bring Viet Nam over to the side of reason. Continued Soviet assistance to Viet Nam simply reinforced the view that the Soviet Union had no plans of abandoning its expansionist strategy in South-East Asia, even in the era of "glasnost".

Mrs. HOANG BICH LIEN (Observer for Viet Nam) said that, once again, the Council was being asked to adopt a draft decision which totally misrepresented the current situation in Kampuchea. Draft decision XIX merely repeated previous resolutions without acknowledging any of the ongoing positive developments in the region. As her delegation had already pointed out, human rights were no longer being violated in Kampuchea. The draft decision interfered in the internal affairs of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and simply assisted mounting efforts in South-East Asia to thwart a political settlement.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision XIX.

In favour: Australia, Belgium, Belize, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lesotho, Liberia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka,

Sudan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Against: Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, German
Democratic Republic, India, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Poland,
Syrian Arab Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Abstaining: Iraq, Trinidad and Tobago.

Draft decision XIX was adopted by 40 votes to 9, with 2 abstentions.

Draft decisions XX and XXI (E/1988/89/Add.1)

Draft decisions XX and XXI were adopted.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (E/1988/91)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the draft resolutions and draft decisions recommended by the Second (Social) Committee in paragraphs 22 and 23 respectively of its report in document E/1988/91.

Draft resolutions I, II, III and IV were adopted.

Draft decisions I and II were adopted.

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
(continued)
(E/1988/L.28)

The PRESIDENT said that the Secretary of the Council would read out the text of the final preambular paragraph of draft resolution E/1988/L.28, which Austria had revised orally in introducing the draft resolution.

Mr. ACAKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Council) read out the following version of the final preambular paragraph of draft resolution E/1988/L.28:

"Noting that the Committee agreed, in examining reports, to take account of the different cultural and socio-economic systems of the countries."

Mrs. MUKHERJEE (India) suggested that the word "countries" be amended to "States parties" in the revised version of the final preambular paragraph.

Mr. KRENKEL (Observer for Austria) said that such an amendment would be logical since only States parties to the Convention would be submitting reports.

Draft resolution E/1988/L.28, as orally amended, was adopted.

Ms. SANTHOSE (Observer for Indonesia) said that the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) had not been available until the day before delegations were due to make their comments. Late distribution of reports posed a particular problem for Indonesia and other countries whose reports had been considered by CEDAW at its second session.

ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS (continued) [14]

Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (E/1988/L.4)

The PRESIDENT said that the Group of African States had endorsed the candidatures of Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Sao Tome and Principe and Zaire for election to four of the Group's five vacancies on the UNDP Governing Council. It wished to postpone until the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council the election of one member from the Group for a three-year term beginning on the first day of the organizational meeting of the Governing Council in February 1989. If he heard no objection, he would declare Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Sao Tome and Principe and Zaire elected to the Governing Council. The election of the one remaining member from the African Group would be deferred to the Council's second regular session of 1988.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.