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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Fortieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 934th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 19 August 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. SHAHI

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF COPIES OF PETITIONS, COPIES OF REPORTS AND OTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO TRUST AND NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES AND TO ALL OTHER TERRITORIES TO WHICH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1514 (XV) APPLIES, IN CONFORMITY WITH ARTICLE 15 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 5) (concluded)*

1. Ms. SADIQ ALI speaking as convener of the working groups set up under agenda item 5, said that Mr. Amadou had withdrawn his reservation to the text of the draft conclusion circulated at the 932nd meeting, so that the text could be adopted without amendment.

It was so decided.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 3) (continued)*

Draft model report for States parties to the Convention

2. Mr. RHENAN SEGURA said that a working party consisting of Mr. Banton, Mr. Wolfrum and himself had worked on the suggested draft model report for States parties to the Convention, which had been prepared by Mr. Banton and had been circulated to all members of the Committee. When the suggestion had been discussed at the meeting on 12 March 1991, one of the principal doubts expressed concerned the reaction of States parties if they received such a document together with the consolidated guidelines. Mr. Banton had proposed that the model report should first be sent out on an experimental basis with a request for comments. Other members of the Committee, on the other hand, believed that it would be necessary to adopt any such model report formally from the outset. A third possibility, which the working party recommended, was that the Committee should remit the model report to the Centre for Human Rights, which would conduct a training session under the programme of technical assistance, with the request that it should try the model out and report back to the Committee on its experience.

3. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would assume that the Committee wished to follow Mr. Rhenan Segura's third suggestion.

It was so agreed.

* Resumed from the 932nd meeting

Communications from States parties

4. The CHAIRMAN said that a communication had been received from Germany asking whether its eleventh report could be submitted with its twelfth report at a later date in order to take sufficient account of the events that had occurred since reunification, in particular, in the new Länder. Kuwait had requested a postponement, given the continuing difficulties it was

experiencing in the aftermath of the Iraqi occupation. He suggested that those two requests should be approved.

It was so agreed.

5. The CHAIRMAN announced that the reports of Greece and Costa Rica had been received.

Reconsideration of reports of States parties that are overdue (concluded)**

Fourth periodic report of the Bahamas (CERD/ C/ 88/ Add. 2) (concluded)**

6. Mr. BANTON, reverting to the Committee's discussion on the situation in the Bahamas, said that the Committee's general conclusion would read "The Committee regretted that the Bahamas had not responded to its invitation to participate in its meeting and to furnish relevant information. It decided to request the State party to submit the reports due, and wished to draw the attention of the State party to the availability of technical assistance from the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in the preparation of reports of treaty-monitoring bodies."

7. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that the general conclusion should explain that the failure of the Bahamas to send representatives was largely due to the fact that the country did not have diplomatic representation in Geneva.

8. Mr. WOLFRUM said that the usual practice in such cases was to express regret, if the State party concerned was represented in Geneva, and, if it was not, to use the formula "The Committee regrets that it was impossible to send a representative ...".

** Resumed from the 926th meeting.

9. Mr. BANTON said that he was not certain that practice had been so consistent. It might be better to have a summary paragraph stating that, at its thirty-ninth session, the Committee had discussed the situation in 13 States parties, mentioning that requests for postponement had been received from four of them, that one of those requests had been acceded to, and that of the remainder one had sent a representative to attend the meeting for consideration of its report, while in 11 cases the Committee had proceeded in the absence of a representative of the State party. The Committee could then go on to indicate which of the 11 were represented in Geneva.

10. Mr. AMADOU and Mr. GARVALOV said that excuses for non-attendance should not be offered on behalf of States parties not represented in Geneva.

11. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that some countries could hardly find the resources to send a representative to the session and it was therefore unfair to expect

them to do so.

12. Mr. WOLFRUM said that all the Committee's decisions were taken by consensus, and the issue raised by Mr. Aboul-Nasr had been duly taken into account. In his view, the Committee should not revert to matters on which decisions had already been taken.

13. Mr. LAMPTEY pointed out that the Convention did not require States to send a representative. It was, however, the usual practice and was useful for the purpose of maintaining a dialogue. Mr. Aboul-Nasr's point that some States could not afford to do so was well taken.

14. The CHAIRMAN said he assumed that the text read out by Mr. Banton was acceptable.

It was so agreed.

SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (agenda item 6)
(concluded)*

15. Mr. FERRERO COSTA, referring to Mr. Banton's paper on model legislation, said that a working group with Mr. Yutzis as convener had met once to discuss the paper, but had agreed that it should hold a further meeting in view of the complexity of the issues involved and that further discussion in the Committee should be postponed until the next session.

16. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that the paper raised a number of difficult questions which could not be resolved before the next session of the General Assembly. In any case, the topic was not of such urgency as to require immediate action on the part of the Committee.

17. Mr. de GOUTTES suggested that each member of the Committee should be asked for comments on the draft model legislation with a view to further discussion at a later stage.

18. Mr. YUTZIS said that he agreed with the previous speakers and proposed that the matter should be taken up at the next session, but that the working group should meet before the end of the current session in order to discuss the methodology of its approach. Members of the Committee, as Mr. de Gouttes had suggested, should be asked for their comments.

It was so decided.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9, PARAGRAPH 1, OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 2)

19. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, at the thirty-ninth session, it had been suggested that a special meeting of States parties should be convened during the period 1990-1993 to assess experience gained in implementation of the Convention. In the course of discussion at the thirty-ninth session, it had been pointed out that in any case a meeting of States parties was to be held in January 1992, and thus there would be no need for a special meeting to be convened to discuss that particular point. It had been suggested that the meeting might perhaps be extended for one day for that purpose.

20. Mr. LAMPTEY said that, in view of the changed circumstances, an extension of one day would serve no purpose.

21. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to drop the request for an extension.

It was so agreed.

22. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that it would be appropriate for the Committee's report to include a statement of its views on meetings in New York. The Committee should refer to article 15 of the Convention as well as to the request by States parties that the Committee should meet in New York in March and in Geneva in August. Mention might also be made of the fact that not all States had permanent missions in Geneva.

23. Mr. BANTON said that it was not a good time to put Mr. Aboul-Nasr's proposal to the General Assembly, as the outcome of the proposal for a "contingency reserve fund" was still open. If, in March 1992, the Committee was again faced with a large number of States that were late with their reports, some of them also having difficulty in arranging for representation in Geneva, it would then be in a stronger position to present a case for sessions in New York. The Committee might state in its report that it had been in touch with the 13 States parties that were seriously in arrears in submitting reports and that the situation in 11 of these States had been examined without a representative being present, although some of them had diplomatic missions in Geneva. The Committee was aware that there was no obligation on States parties to send a representative and that some States might like to do so, but had difficulty in meeting the costs. At some time in the future, therefore, it might be advisable to schedule a session in New York for the benefit of States that had missions there and could not easily arrange for representation at meetings in Geneva.

24. Mr. LAMPTEY said that he did not agree with Mr. Banton's tactical approach, and endorsed Mr. Aboul-Nasr's comments. The Committee should not prevaricate, but should take a decision as to where it considered its sessions should be held, irrespective of the outcome of the States parties' meeting. He recalled that the decision to hold the Committee's two sessions in Geneva had been taken for financial reasons. He reiterated the view he had expressed on several occasions that holding both sessions in Geneva did not facilitate the Committee's work, either in terms of States parties' reporting, since many of them did not have adequate diplomatic representation in Geneva, or in terms of the publicity given to the Committee's work.

25. Mr. VIDAS endorsed Mr. Lamprey's comments.

26. The CHAIRMAN suggested that Mr. Banton, as Rapporteur, should incorporate the views expressed by Mr. Lamprey and Mr. Aboul-Nasr in the Committee's report to the General Assembly, following previous procedure. Although the Committee could not go against the States parties' decision, it was fully entitled to give its views.

It was so agreed.

27. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that, among the urgent issues

recommended by the Bureau for action by the Committee, there remained the question of information from members responsible for liaison with other human rights bodies.

28. Mr. RHENAN SEGURA informed the Committee that he had had no contact with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and therefore had nothing to report.

29. Mr. WOLFRUM reporting on his liaison with the Human Rights Committee, said that, in considering States' reports, the Human Rights Committee had frequently dealt with issues of relevance to the concerns of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

30. In considering the report of Canada, members of the Human Rights Committee had inquired, under article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, about the content of the self-government proposals being negotiated with Indian communities, how many members of Indian minority groups had been elected to the Senate or the House of Commons, and what legislative measures were envisaged by the Canadian Government for the recognition of linguistic rights. With reference to the revision of the Indian Act, Committee members had asked whether there had been difficulties arising from the fact that Indian rights had been restored to the first generation only and why the Indian Act had been excluded from the Canadian Human Rights Act. As in the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, questions had specifically been asked about the events in Oka, why civil rights had been suspended without any parliamentary debate, and why the National Defence Act had been invoked rather than the Emergency Measures Act. The Human Rights Committee had expressed concern over the situation of Canada's minorities, especially its indigenous peoples, and expressed the hope that the Federal Government would continue its constitutional reforms to facilitate the indigenous peoples' movement towards autonomy.

31. When debating the report of Finland, members of the Human Rights Committee had asked whether the new self-government Act for the Aaland Islands had been enacted by Parliament. The content of the Act would certainly be of interest to the members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination when it considered the next report of Finland. The questions asked about the Finnish Romanies had been similar to those raised in the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. With regard to the Samis, the members of the Human Rights Committee had asked why the Finnish authorities' approach concerning reindeer herding differed from that of Sweden. In Finland, reindeer herding was not just limited to a privileged fraction of the Samis. The Finnish response to that question was that the economic situation was different. When dealing with the next Swedish report, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination might take that information into account.

32. When discussing the report of Spain, the Human Rights Committee had asked whether any changes might be introduced into the existing structure of the Spanish State in response to the claims of the Basque minority, whether languages other than Spanish could be used in the courts, and what measures had been taken to preserve gypsy culture and to encourage the use of their language. According to the records, those questions had not yet been answered.

33. The situation of ethnic groups had only been touched upon briefly when the Human Rights Committee had discussed the report of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The question had referred to the resettlement of Tatars and the use of the Hungarian, Polish, Russian and Tatar languages.

34. Regarding India, the Human Rights Committee had questioned the statement that "the reference to ethnic minorities does not apply to Indian society". The Indian representative had replied that the Indian people formed a composite whole racially, and hence the concept of ethnic minorities and ethnic majority did not apply. At the same time, reference had been made to linguistic and religious minorities. The response had not fully satisfied the members of the Human Rights Committee.

35. The Human Rights Committee had not been satisfied with the information provided by Sweden on the Sami people, and the Swedish representative had promised detailed information on their situation in the next report.

36. The Human Rights Committee received a large number of human rights communications and had gained substantial experience in dealing with them. Communications which might be of interest for the further work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination included communication No. 413/1990, in which several citizens of South Tyrol claimed that the Italian Government had violated the right of self-determination by transgressing certain rights of the autonomous legislative and executive regional power of the province. The Human Rights Committee had declared the communication inadmissible, since it had not alleged the violation of individual rights. The content of the communication would, however, be of interest to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination when it next discussed the report of Italy since it concerned the status of ethnic groups in northern Italy. Another very interesting communication had been No. 167/1984, submitted by the Chief of the Lubicon Lake Band and alleging the violation by Canada of the group's land and property rights and cultural identity. The Canadian Government had not accepted the Band as a small Indian group. The case yielded very interesting information about Canada's treatment of small Indian tribes.

37. In conclusion, since many of the questions dealt with by the Human Rights Committee were of direct or indirect concern to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the latter should establish some kind of working relationship with the Human Rights Committee.

38. The CHAIRMAN agreed that consideration might be given to Mr. Wolfrum's proposal for liaison with the Human Rights Committee. It would be most useful if Mr. Wolfrum could draw the Committee's attention to matters covered by the Human Rights Committee when the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered the reports of the relevant countries.

39. Mr. ABOUL-NASR requested further clarification about the dissatisfaction expressed by the Human Rights Committee with the report of Sweden, and whether any action had been taken. He wished to know whether the Human Rights Committee's follow-up to the examination of the reports submitted to it differed from that of the Committee, and whether the latter could learn anything from the work of the former Committee. Finally, he asked what procedure might be adopted for recording the important information derived

from the Human Rights Committee's consideration of States' reports for use by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in future.

40. Mr. WOLFRUM said that the Human Rights Committee's method of dealing with reports was similar to that of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, except that its final remarks were not recorded in the form of an assessment. With regard to the report of Sweden, the final wording had not contained an expression of the Human Rights Committee's dissatisfaction, since the Swedish representative had undertaken to provide further information on the Samis.

41. The methods of work of the two Committees was similar when it came to considering States parties' reports, although the Human Rights Committee was perhaps at some advantage in terms of the amount of information it received, since its mandate was broader. The real difference lay in the consideration of communications, of which the Human Rights Committee received a large number. It had developed considerable experience over the years and received a vast amount of additional information. With regard to the procedure to be followed in bringing information obtained from the Human Rights Committee to the attention of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, he would certainly be willing to submit the information to the Committee in writing and update it as further information became available, but he pointed out that such information would necessarily be filtered, and suggested that documents of direct relevance to the Committee should be distributed to all members of the Committee.

42. Mr. BANTON, reporting on his liaison with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, said that that Committee had not yet appointed a member to liaise with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. That Committee's draft report, forwarded in response to his request for information, contained little information of relevance to the work of the Committee, but he drew attention to a point of interest concerning its working methods, namely, the existence of a pre-sessional working group to identify issues to be taken up by reporting States.

43. Ms. SADIQ ALI, reporting on her liaison with the Group of Three established under the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, said that she had had no direct contacts with the Group, since it was only due to meet in January 1992. On the basis of documentation she had obtained from the Secretariat, however, she was able to report to the Committee on the relationship between its work and that of the Committee under article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Group of Three dealt mainly with the identification of persons and transnational corporations, on which she would not elaborate for want of time. The Group, reporting to the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-seventh session, had said that only two States parties had submitted their views on the responsibility of transnational corporations for the continued existence of the system of apartheid in South Africa and had called for all States parties to do likewise. The Group of Three faced the same problems as the Committee in regard to the submission of reports. As at 3 December 1990, some 180 reports were overdue and some had not been drafted in accordance with the general guidelines. Only 88 States were parties to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. At

the 1991 session, only two reports had been received, as compared to the average of 10 reports per year received in previous years.

44. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had expressed international solidarity with the peoples struggling against apartheid in South Africa, under article 3 of the Convention. It had worked to maximize South African diplomatic and ideological isolation at the risk of being criticized as going beyond its mandate. It considered the lifting of sanctions premature. Article IV (b) of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid was related to article 7 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination with regard to the implementation of preventive measures. Similarly, article V of the former Convention contemplated the establishment of an international penal tribunal having jurisdiction with respect to the violations specified in article II. The legal punishability of offences in both articles II and V were related to article IV of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. However, whereas the latter article was mandatory, in the case of the anti-apartheid Convention, penal action was applicable only to those States parties that had accepted the jurisdiction of such a tribunal. In fact, as at 1990, the tribunal had not yet been established. The methodology of work of the Committee and the Group of Three was similar in the presentation and examination of reports.

45. It was imperative that, when raising questions on apartheid under article 3 of the Convention, the Committee should request States parties to ratify the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. It could ask questions on the role of transnational corporations working in their territories and request them to cease their operations in South Africa. Under article 7, questions might be raised on the role of the media, teaching and education, action taken to sensitize officials and create greater awareness of the anti-apartheid Convention, and on anti-apartheid organizations in the State party. The Committee should also continue to appeal to States parties not to relax sanctions, thus supporting the people of South Africa in their legitimate struggle for freedom and equality. It should also ask for information on the assistance given to national liberation movements in South Africa. It should be remembered that with the dismantling of apartheid the evils of the system would not disappear from the hearts and minds of those who had practised it.

46. M. YUTZIS, reporting on his liaison with the Commission on Human Rights, said that he had had contact with the secretariat of the Commission, since the Commission itself was not due to meet until February-March 1992. The Commission was a complex body and worked very differently from the Committee or other human rights bodies. He was in the process of drawing up a list of topics and items dealt with by the Commission that were of particular interest to the Committee, on the basis of information and communications received by the Commission on a particular State, such as Canada, and also on the basis of adopted draft resolutions dealing with specific subjects, notably those which would be taken up by the Commission at future sessions. Iraq and Israel were among the items thus scheduled for consideration. A substantial amount of useful information was available that was directly or indirectly relevant to the Committee's work. He proposed to collect the information for submission to the Committee.

47. In addition, the Committee could usefully keep itself informed of certain ongoing questions dealt with by the Commission, taking into account the political scope of the Commission's mandate. He was thinking, in particular, of the work carried out by its working group on minorities. Whether or not he continued to be a member of the Committee, he believed that the Committee should maintain liaison with the Commission and be informed of its deliberations at its forthcoming session on issues of relevance to the Committee.

48. Mr. VIDAS, reporting on his contact with the Committee Against Torture, said that it had held its fifth session in November 1990 and its sixth in April/May 1991. There were 55 States parties to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, of whom 25 had recognized the Committee's competence to review individual communications against them. States parties were obliged to submit reports every four years. The fifth and sixth sessions had considered reports from Algeria, Chile (an additional report, because the Committee had been dissatisfied with the original report submitted by the military Government in 1989), Ecuador (from which the Committee had requested an additional report), Finland, Greece, the Netherlands, Panama, Spain and Turkey. It had discussed a draft Optional Protocol to the Convention submitted by Costa Rica to the Commission on Human Rights. The Optional Protocol provided for a universal system of visits by experts to places of detention. The Committee had supported the draft in principle, although it had expressed doubts about whether such universality could be achieved. It had decided to defer its decision until it had learnt the reaction of the Commission on Human Rights.

49. Mr. de GOUTTES reminded the Committee that, following a report by a member of the European Parliament, Mr. Glyn Ford, on racism and xenophobia, he had been asked to make contact with the Parliament. He had been in communication first with a representative of its information bureau and had been informed that a parliamentary group on racial discrimination had been set up as a result of the report. He had been invited to attend its session in October 1991, when progress on the matter would be discussed. He therefore wished to know whether the Committee thought he should attend and, more generally, what should be the nature of the Committee's dealings with the European Parliament. He suggested that, in any case, a regular exchange of information through the secretariat would be worth while.

50. The CHAIRMAN felt that the suggestion was acceptable. He requested members' views on Mr. de Gouttes' first question.

51. Mr. ABOUL-NASR could see no objection to Mr. de Gouttes attending the meeting. He asked, however, whether the European Parliament would only provide the Committee with public documents, since he understood that the Parliament also dealt with restricted ones.

52. Mr. de GOUTTES, pointing out that the parliamentary group had only just been formed, said that an answer to that question could only be given after the session in October 1991.

53. Mr. YUTZIS said that liaison with other human rights bodies did not necessarily entail attending their meetings. He was not clear whether the Committee took the view that Mr. de Gouttes could or should attend the

European Parliament meeting. He himself faced the same dilemma with regard to the Commission on Human Rights.

54. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, at the 898th meeting on 11 March 1991, the Chairman had stated that members should not participate in the deliberations of other human rights bodies because their attendance would be unconstitutional. It seemed to him, however, that if the discussions in the parliamentary group were to be informal, Mr. de Gouttes' attendance would be acceptable.

55. Mr. de GOUTTES explained that the group was a working group within the European Parliament, not a parliamentary group as such, although it met during the parliamentary session.

56. Mr. ABOUL-NASR considered it perfectly acceptable for Mr. de Gouttes to attend the meeting, on the understanding that he was not a formal delegate from the Committee. Informal contacts could only be welcomed.

57. Mr. de GOUTTES said that although he was alive to the possible risks involved, he thought that the benefits of his attending could be considerable. If the Committee preferred, however, he could decline the invitation but ask to receive relevant documents.

58. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the European Parliament group did not fall into the category of a human rights body. He suggested that Mr. de Gouttes should be free to exercise his own judgement.

CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNICATIONS UNDER ARTICLE 14 OF THE CONVENTION
(agenda item 4)

59. Mr. SCHMIDT (Communications Section, Centre for Human Rights) said that, following the Committee's consideration of communication No. 2/1989 on 18 March 1991, its conclusions had been transmitted to the State party and the author. There were no communications outstanding. One had been received, but had not been submitted to the Committee, because it required some clarification, which the Secretariat had requested. A "contact letter" had also been received, which did not meet the basic criteria for a communication. The author had been informed, but had not yet replied.

60. Mr. YUTZIS said he questioned whether the Committee should be dealing with communications, even in general terms, in open session. He was concerned that so few communications were received under article 14 and thought that the matter merited serious discussion.

61. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should take note of the information provided by the Secretariat and postpone further consideration of the item to the next session, without prejudice to the point raised by Mr. Yutzis.

It was so agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS (concluded)*

Joint meeting of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (concluded)

62. The CHAIRMAN said that at the joint meeting held that morning, Mr. Ferrero Costa, the Committee's representative, had expressed the hope that the two Chairmen would keep in touch. Since the Sub-Commission met only once a year in August, any contacts should be made immediately.

63. Mr. FERRERO COSTA said that the joint meeting with the Sub-Commission had been very profitable, in that it had fulfilled its purpose of beginning a dialogue. He thought it would be useful for the two Chairmen to meet before the end of the Committee's session. If a second joint meeting was to take place, a decision on the matter should be taken in the current year, otherwise it might be difficult to arrange. He thought it was important that the relationship should be continued.

64. Mr. YUTZIS said he had thought there would be more joint talks as a result of the working relationship that had been inaugurated. Such talks should not be general, but should follow a joint agenda. Specific proposals had already been made on suitable subjects for joint discussion.

65. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the preparation of a joint agenda would be a considerable undertaking, perhaps more so for the Sub-Commission than for the Committee.

66. Mr. WOLFRUM said a joint agenda would only be necessary if there was a definite decision to hold a second joint meeting.

67. Mr. de GOUTTES said he was in favour of another joint meeting with the Sub-Commission. An agenda could be prepared at the Committee's next session.

68. Mr. AHMADU considered that it should be left to the Sub-Commission to decide whether it wished to maintain further contact with the Committee.

69. The CHAIRMAN said that no decision could be taken until the Committee had reached agreement on the course it wished to take.

Holding a press conference

70. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Secretariat had arranged for the Committee to hold a press conference the following day. He asked for suggestions on what aspects of the Committee's work attention should be focused.

71. Mr. BANTON said that it was important to ask journalists what information they wanted. He was not sure that the press releases on the Committee's proceedings met their needs.

72. Mr. VIDAS thought that the Chairman should inform journalists on the items under discussion in the Committee, a number of which would surely be of interest to them.

73. Mr. ABOUL-NASR suggested that the Chairman might repeat the introductory remarks he had made that morning at the joint meeting with the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

74. Mr. WOLFRUM agreed. The Chairman should indicate what States' reports had been considered and what conclusions had been adopted. He doubted whether the press releases were of any interest.

75. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that no newspaper would print a reference to the fact that a State had not replied to the Committee's questions: the Committee's work did not lend itself to use by the media.

76. Mr. de GOUTTES said that it would be wrong to underestimate the importance of the press conference and the Committee should exploit its possible political impact. He agreed with Mr. Banton's proposal that journalists should be asked whether the press releases met their expectations and with the proposal by Mr. Vidas that they should be asked whether they wished to receive a list of items to be considered by the Committee.

77. Mr. GARVALOV suggested that the Chairman should explain the difficulties encountered by the Committee in assessing the situation in States that did not submit reports or send representatives.

78. Mr. YUTZIS suggested that some members of the Bureau should also be present to assist the Chairman, who should concentrate on the more recent work of the Committee and be prepared to respond to difficult questions that might be raised. The scope and limitations of the Committee should be made clear to the press as well as some of the issues involved with regard to the compliance with the Convention.

79. The CHAIRMAN said he assumed members of the Committee agreed that, if the press requested such information, he should name those States that were not providing adequate information. He would be glad if the three Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur could accompany him. The press conference was open to all the members of the Committee. One of the Vice-Chairmen should be ready to give brief information on each of the country reports and on the number of States which had not reported.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.