



**International Convention on
the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Sixty-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1607th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 20 August 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. DIACONU

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MR. SERGIO VIEIRA DE MELLO, THE
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE IN IRAQ

1. The Chairman paid tribute to the memory of Mr. Vieira de Mello. He condemned the horrific and unjust terrorist attack on the United Nations Headquarters in Baghdad. Along with that of Mr. Vieira de Mello, it had claimed the lives of many United Nations personnel who had been doing their utmost to help the Iraqi people.

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.

3. The CHAIRMAN welcomed Mr. Lazarev, Programme Specialist in the fight against discrimination and racism at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and invited him to present the Organization's draft integrated strategy to combat racism and racial discrimination.

PRESENTATION BY MR. SERGUEI LAZAREV, UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

4. Mr. LAZAREV (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) added his tribute to the memory of Mr. Vieira de Mello.

5. He said that following the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban (South Africa) in 2001, the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had decided that, as part of the Organization's follow up to the Conference, it should work out a new integrated strategy to combat racism and racial discrimination. The draft strategy would be submitted for adoption to the General Conference at its September 2003 session. The strategy was intended to act as a basis for the Organization's activities for the following six years.

6. UNESCO had decided that a new strategy was needed as a response to the worldwide resurgence of intolerant ideologies, xenophobic discourse and acts of racism. New forms of discrimination, linked to certain aspects of globalization and scientific and technological progress had also emerged. The moral rearmament expressed by the international community at the Durban Conference required a response. Despite some political difficulties, the international community had endorsed the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in General Assembly resolution A/RES/56/266 of 27 March 2002. Furthermore, UNESCO felt that it needed to revitalize its fight against racism and discrimination, which had lost some of its momentum following the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.

7. In the past, UNESCO's strategies and activities concerning discrimination had focused on three main areas. First, there had been a strategy of scientific deconstruction of racist theories. That had begun in 1950 with the Statement on Race, which had been followed in 1951 by the Statement on the Nature of Race and Race Differences, and the Statement on the Biological Aspect of Race in 1964.

8. Secondly, UNESCO had adopted a strategy of elaborating international standard-setting instruments. The first of those had been the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), followed by the Recommendation concerning International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974). In 1976, the General Conference had adopted a Recommendation on Participation by the People at Large in Cultural Life and Their Contribution to It. Two declarations had been issued in 1978: one on Race and Racial Prejudice and the other on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War. More recently UNESCO had proclaimed three further milestone declarations: in 1995, the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, in 1997, the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights and, in 2001, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

9. UNESCO's third main strategy, that of activities in the field, had included a special programme against apartheid and the "Slave Route" project, which had been greatly appreciated by the international community.

10. The framework of UNESCO's new strategy had been partly restricted by the need to focus all programme activities as a consequence of the Organization's reform process; another determining factor was UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (2002-2007). The Organization had also had to respond to the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, a series of studies into various aspects of racism and discrimination and the recommendations of regional consultations and the interregional meeting held in Osaka (Japan) in June 2003. Last but not least, UNESCO had consulted its various partners, primarily the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

11. The general objectives of the study were: to rejuvenate UNESCO's activities in the fight against racism and discrimination in each of its fields of competence; to strengthen cooperation with other United Nations bodies and with international and regional intergovernmental organizations; and to step up awareness-raising in the field, by forging new partnerships and remobilizing UNESCO's traditional partners.

12. There were also a number of specific aims. The Organization wished to strengthen the institutional capacities of the different actors, in the fields of advocacy, research, education and communication. Another aim was to enhance knowledge of the evolution of discrimination inherited from the past, in particular with regard to slavery and colonization, along with discrimination against autochthonous peoples and cultural and religious minorities. Research was to be pursued into the new forms of discrimination linked with globalization and scientific and technological progress. The Organization wished to contribute to the framing and application of appropriate local, national and regional policies. It also set out to collect, compare and publicize good practices in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance.

13. In framing its strategy, UNESCO had faced a number of constraints, including the obvious magnitude of the problems to be addressed, the fact that so many actors were already involved and UNESCO's limited financial and staffing resources. The Organization had, therefore, been obliged to choose specific themes, to take into account regional characteristics and to make a limited choice of priorities for each region. It also saw the need for operational and innovative activities.
14. The first main area included in the draft strategy was the advancement of scientific research and a study of the phenomena of racism, discrimination and xenophobia. That would include issues of racial dominance, identity, scientific progress, HIV/AIDS and globalization.
15. The second area was the need to review and/or revitalize UNESCO's existing standard-setting instruments; he believed that the Committee was also trying to respond to the same need. UNESCO would be urging further ratification of the Convention against Discrimination in Education. It would also play a part in improving the monitoring of implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and intended to strengthen cooperation with other United Nations agencies with regard to the follow-up to the Durban Conference.
16. The third area - one in which cooperation between UNESCO and the Committee would be vital - was that of research into new educational approaches, the preparation of teacher materials and the definition of statistical indicators. That would include comparative studies, teacher training, school exchanges, dialogue about racism at school, guidelines for new school textbooks on racism and discrimination, criteria for revising history textbooks, teaching material on stigmatization and discrimination involving HIV/AIDS, a publication on the fight against racism and intolerance (due to appear in early 2004) and statistical indicators to improve ways of gauging the prevalence of racism and discrimination. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics in Montreal (Canada) would particularly welcome the views of the Committee on the last subject.
17. The fourth area was the mobilization of political decision-makers against racism and discrimination. That would mean launching awareness-raising campaigns among young people, artists, sportsmen and women, journalists, scientists, teachers and religious leaders. The UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors should be more involved in the fight against racism while politicians should be encouraged to frame and implement anti-racist and anti-discriminatory regulations.
18. The fifth area was the preservation of diversity in multi-ethnic and multicultural societies. The strategy focused on the need to build a democratic citizenship respectful of diversity. Detailed studies would be conducted on cultural discrimination against minorities, in particular in the audio-visual sector.
19. The sixth area was the fight against racist propaganda in the media and cyberspace. UNESCO intended to prepare an ethics charter for Internet professionals and to stage awareness campaigns for politicians and professionals.

20. The priorities for the different regions included stepping up the fight against racism affecting populations of African origin and encouraging mutual contacts between Africans and members of the African Diaspora. Support would be given to research into the consequences of racism, discrimination and social exclusion inherited from traditional cultures, slavery and colonization and the emergence of new forms of discrimination. More effort would go into campaigns aimed at publicizing the existence of racism and discrimination and at disseminating information about major international instruments whose aim was to combat them. Assistance would be given to the authorities to translate the findings of research into racism and discrimination into policies and other practical measures. Particular attention would be paid to xenophobia and the new manifestations of anti-Semitism and Arabophobia. Assistance would be given to the establishment of dialogue and positive interaction between the State and civil society, in particular in the new democracies.

21. The operational activities of the strategy would focus on forming new partnerships, with priority being given to sports and youth organizations, town halls, artists and the private sector, in particular the companies participating in the United Nations Global Compact. In order to be effective, the strategy would require close intersectoral cooperation and coordination at UNESCO. It would be a medium-term strategy, covering three biennial programmes. At its September 2003 session, the General Conference would have to earmark sufficient funds for the strategy from the UNESCO budget 2004-2005. Close cooperation would be needed with UNESCO's Field Offices and national commissions, and with civil society. Finally, the appropriate indicators would have to be created in order to assess implementation of the strategy.

22. The CHAIRMAN invited members of the Committee to put questions to Mr. Lazarev.

23. Mr. YUTZIS asked how, from an operational point of view, UNESCO foresaw cooperation and consultation with other bodies. In the Durban Declaration, it had been made clear that the Committee was to be the leading body in implementing the aims of the Declaration. He wished to know how the strategy would balance the aims of the 1960 UNESCO Convention against those of the International Convention. He also wanted to know more about the anti-apartheid programme mentioned in the presentation and the way in which the term apartheid was being interpreted at UNESCO.

24. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that the strategy would play a very important role in the elimination of racial discrimination. He felt, however, that in his presentation Mr. Lazarev had failed to mention ways in which people living in developing countries, who made up the majority of the world's population, were to be reached by the strategy. Those people - farmers, tribespeople and nomads - tended to be illiterate and had no access to the media. Some of their customs were discriminatory and based on notions of racial superiority and domination. Had UNESCO considered the possibility of reaching out to those people through churches and mosques, for example?

25. Mr. THIAM asked whether UNESCO had planned any logistical assistance for developing countries in the use of the Internet. In countries like Guinea, schools and universities were not connected to the Internet. Developing countries lacked policies and means in that area. Where the Internet was being introduced in developing countries, national legislation could not keep up with developments and populations lacked protection from the adverse aspects of the Internet. What was UNESCO's policy in that respect?

26. Mr. Lazarev had mentioned UNESCO's intention to develop ties between the people of Africa and members of the African Diaspora. Despite its laudable efforts, the TOKTEN programme (transfer of knowledge through expatriate nationals) had yielded disappointing results. Although members of the Diaspora had invested in education and health in African countries, such as Guinea, the programme had achieved little. He asked whether UNESCO was proposing any innovative approaches to solving that problem.

27. Mr. KJAERUM asked why UNESCO had chosen to refer to "Arabophobia" rather than "Islamophobia". The Committee preferred the latter term.

28. Mr. de GOUTTES said he understood that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) helped States parties prepare their reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and he asked whether it might be possible for Mr. Lazarev's section at UNESCO to provide similar support to States parties in preparing their reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, particularly in the areas of education and culture.

29. Mr. AMIR said that, according to his information, there had been a sharp decline in the number of opportunities for nationals of Muslim countries to register for doctorates in other countries and even those who completed such doctorates were not always able to obtain positions in laboratories for further training that would enable them to put their knowledge to use in their own countries. That trend appeared to be a manifestation of discrimination against certain minorities in the area of scientific research, and he wondered whether UNESCO had addressed that problem.

30. Ms. JANUARY-BARDILL said it was good to know that Durban was still on the agenda and that all the effort that had gone into organizing the World Conference against Racism had not gone to waste. Referring to the Committee's General Recommendation No. 25, she said she would encourage UNESCO to integrate the gender perspective into its strategy. There had been no mention of gender in the presentation.

31. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as a member of the Committee, noted that the documents that had been mentioned were available individually through the Internet, but he wondered whether it might be possible to receive them as a single set. He wondered whether UNESCO had carried out any studies or maintained statistics on the right to access to education and culture among the various population groups around the world.

32. He said he believed that, were the Committee invited to do so, it could make a substantial contribution to UNESCO's own debates. All its official documents were naturally at UNESCO's disposal. Conversely, UNESCO itself had a permanent seat at the Committee table and he hoped a representative would be able to attend regularly.

33. Lastly, he said it would be useful to receive UNESCO reports or studies concerning implementation of the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education. He believed UNESCO had a confidential procedure for dealing with human rights violations within its own sphere of competence. It would be interesting to learn what approach was taken to complaints of human rights violations that overlapped with the Committee's area of expertise, namely racial discrimination in education and culture.

34. Mr. LAZAREV (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), replying to Committee members' questions, pointed out that what he had presented had been a condensed version of a more detailed and refined discussion document. The strategy itself was a statement of intent, which included the aim of cooperating with bodies such as the Committee. It was hoped UNESCO would be able to send a representative to sessions of the Committee on a regular basis and that conversely the Committee would be able to send representatives to meetings organized by UNESCO. Indeed, the process of dialogue had already started: UNESCO had attended consultations in Africa and Latin America organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and had in turn invited OHCHR's Anti-Discrimination Unit to various meetings to discuss the strategy and the follow-up to the World Conference against Racism.

35. In UNESCO's view, primary responsibility for monitoring racial discrimination lay with OHCHR and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The role of the 1960 UNESCO Convention was a secondary one. UNESCO hoped to be able to receive guidelines and advice from the Committee that it could apply in its own specialist areas.

36. The anti-apartheid programme had been mentioned only for information. It had been discontinued when apartheid had ended. The slavery project, on the other hand, was a cultural training and awareness project that would be reinforced in budgetary terms during the forthcoming biennium. UNESCO worked with religious leaders, rather than with religions as such. He believed the religious message of peace, non-discrimination and understanding should be harnessed in the future and religious leaders had an important role to play in that regard. UNESCO had other means of reaching nomadic and other populations, including a low-resource but highly successful programme of community radio broadcasting, which had, for instance, brought about certain changes in behaviour patterns and tribalist attitudes.

37. UNESCO's main concern with regard to the Internet was the fact that it was so difficult to influence and that some of the messages transmitted were extremist to a degree. UNESCO was working with media and Internet professionals on codes of conduct and professional ethics, but the issue was a delicate one since it was so closely intertwined with the issue of freedom of expression. The main thrust of UNESCO's work in that regard was awareness-raising and training. Projects were also under way to provide educational establishments with equipment, although not on a worldwide basis, for budgetary reasons.

38. With regard to African countries and the African Diaspora, he said the issue was certainly being discussed with UNESCO's partners and in its national commissions, and the strategy would be of assistance in consideration of the problem. The process must be one of bringing together educationalists and intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic and would require concerted efforts.

39. The term "Islamophobia" referred to a religious group, unlike "anti-Semitism", which referred to ethnic origin; "Arabophobia" was therefore considered to be a true parallel to "anti-Semitism". Some guidance from the Committee in that regard would nevertheless be useful.

40. With regard to UNESCO assistance with the preparation of States parties' reports to the Committee, he said it might be possible to work out joint guidelines for States parties, which also covered UNESCO's sphere of competence. Any concrete proposals in that regard could be put forward for inclusion in the programme of work and budget for the forthcoming biennium.

41. He did not believe there was any information available regarding the numbers of nationals of Arab countries admitted to doctorate programmes. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics was, however, always interested in developing new indicators and that point might prove useful as an indicator in the area of discrimination.

42. The gender dimension, although not mentioned in his presentation, had not in fact been omitted from the more detailed paper. The intention had been to submit a separate paper on gender to the General Conference, but preparation of that paper had had to be postponed and a single paragraph had been inserted in the existing document instead.

43. The UNESCO documents requested would naturally be provided, including any reports on implementation of the 1960 Convention. Unfortunately, certain procedures had fallen into disuse, which was the reason UNESCO's strategy included, as a matter of priority, the review and/or revival of UNESCO instruments. The confidential complaints procedure was currently under review and he would recommend that close contact should be maintained with the Committee in that context.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 4) (continued)

Draft concluding observations on the 16th and 17th periodic reports of the United Kingdom (continued) (CERD/C/63/draftCO/11/Rev.1 (English only))

44. The CHAIRMAN invited Committee members to resume their discussion of the draft concluding observations on the 16th and 17th periodic reports of the United Kingdom (CERD/C/63/draftCO/11/Rev.1).

Paragraph 20

45. Mr. PILLAI, speaking as Country Rapporteur, said he had revised paragraph 20 in the light of Committee members' comments and of the oral replies given by the delegation of the United Kingdom. He proposed that the paragraph should be amended to read as follows:

“The Committee notes that the State Party recognizes the intersectionality of race and religious discrimination, as illustrated by prohibiting discrimination against such communities as Jews and Sikhs. It recommends that religious discrimination of an ethnic nature against the other immigrant religious minorities be likewise prohibited. The Committee is concerned about reported cases of ‘Islamophobia’ following the September 11th attacks. Furthermore, while the Committee takes note that the State Party’s criminal legislation includes offences where religious motives are an aggravating factor, it regrets that incitement to racially-motivated religious hatred is not outlawed.

The Committee recommends that the State Party give early consideration to the extension of the crime of incitement to racial hatred to cover offences motivated by religious hatred against immigrant communities.”

46. Mr. SHAHI said he appreciated Mr. Pillai’s revisions, which he believed brought the paragraph fully within the scope of the Convention on the basis of the statements made by the delegation of the United Kingdom.

47. Paragraph 20, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 21

48. Mr. PILLAI, speaking as Country Rapporteur, suggested replacing the word “enforce” in the third line with the word “implement”.

49. Paragraph 21, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 22

50. Mr. ABOUL-NASR requested clarification of the use of the expression “Gypsies and Travellers”. The term “Roma” was usually used and it was important to be consistent.

51. Mr. PILLAI said the term was preferred by those groups in the United Kingdom.

52. Mr. AVTONOMOV said that, as he understood it, there was in fact a range of preferences among those groups in the United Kingdom, none of which was fully covered by the two options proposed. He suggested using the expression “Roma/Gypsies/Travellers” in both subparagraphs.

53. It was so decided.

54. Paragraph 22, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 23

55. Mr. AVTONOMOV said the same amendment as in paragraph 22 should be made in paragraph 23.

56. Paragraph 23, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 24

57. Mr. SICILIANOS wondered whether, in order to situate the paragraph in context, an introductory sentence might be added, in which the Committee expressed its concern about the problem of descent-based discrimination.

58. Mr. PILLAI (Country Rapporteur) said he would have no objection; the original draft had contained words to that effect. It was important to mention descent-based discrimination because the State party did not seem to consider it a problem and was not planning any legislation in that regard.

59. Mr. SHAHI said immigrants from many countries and many different castes, tribes, or groups lived in the United Kingdom. It was important to draw the State party's attention to potential problems and to encourage it to take preventive measures to guard against descent-based discrimination, so that the prejudices which immigrants had faced in their countries of origin would not be transferred to their new country.

60. Ms. JANUARY-BARDILL said that other countries also received numerous immigrants from Indian and other communities. The Committee should be consistent and refer to caste and descent-based discrimination in the concluding observations relating to other States parties as well.

61. The CHAIRMAN said the situation in each country should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the patterns of immigration and the size and origins of minority communities but without automatically referring to descent-based discrimination. With regard to the current paragraph, he felt that it would be preferable to retain the paragraph as written, pending receipt of the information, which the Committee had requested.

62. It was so decided

Paragraph 25

63. Mr. ABOUL-NASR asked whether the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) was the only British territory not dealt with in the report.

64. Mr. PILLAI (Country Rapporteur) said he was not informed about other territories; he had received specific information with regard to the British Indian Ocean Territory, which was why he had included it.

65. The CHAIRMAN expressed the view that the State party should provide information on discrimination in all its different territories.

66. Paragraph 25 was adopted.

Paragraphs 26 to 30

67. Paragraphs 26 to 30 were adopted.

68. The draft concluding observations on the sixteenth and seventeenth periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as a whole, as amended, were adopted.

Draft concluding observations concerning the first to fourth periodic reports of Albania
(CERD/C/63/draftco/1/Rev.1)

69. Mr. de GOUTTES (Country Rapporteur) said the text before the Committee incorporated the suggestions submitted by Committee members.

Paragraph 1

70. Paragraph 1 was adopted.

Paragraph 2

71. Mr. THORNBERRY suggested that, in the second line, the word “gratification” should be deleted and replaced with the word “gratitude”.

72. Paragraph 2, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 3

73. Mr. THORNBERRY said the word “timetable” should be replaced by the word “periodicity”.

74. The CHAIRMAN said the word “over” should be deleted and replaced with the words “more than”.

75. Mr. PILLAI said that if the report had been due in June 1995, the correct figure should be seven, not eight years.

76. Paragraph 3, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraphs 4 and 5

77. Paragraphs 4 and 5 were adopted.

Paragraph 6

78. Mr. THORNBERRY, supported by Mr. VALENCIA-RODRIGUEZ, suggested that the word “applauds” should be replaced with the word “commends”.

79. Paragraph 6, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 7

80. Mr. de GOUTTES (Country Rapporteur) said that in the French text the words “*de même que*” should be deleted and replaced by the word “*et*” to reflect the English text.

81. Mr. PILLAI, supported by Mr. THORNBERRY, said that the words “the enactment of” should be inserted following the words “represented by” in the second sentence of the paragraph.

82. Paragraph 7, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraphs 8 and 9

83. Paragraphs 8 and 9 were adopted.

Paragraph 10

84. The CHAIRMAN said that in paragraph 10 the word “applauds” should be deleted and replaced with the word “commends”.

85. Paragraph 10, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 11

86. Paragraph 11 was adopted.

Paragraph 12

87. The CHAIRMAN said that in the French text, the word “*regrette*” should be deleted and replaced with the word “*note*” to reflect the English text. He also wondered whether any statistics had been provided on the Greek and other minorities in Albania.

88. Mr. de GOUTTES (Country Rapporteur) said the report itself had noted that no statistics were available for the Roma minority (CERD/C/397/Add.1, para. 101).

89. Mr. SICILIANOS suggested that, in the second sentence, the words “minorities, in particular” should be inserted following the words “exist for”.

90. Mr. de GOUTTES (Country Rapporteur) wondered if the Committee could be sure that no statistics were available for other minorities.

91. Mr. AMIR pointed out that, while the report had provided statistics on the Greek minority, those dated back to 1989 (CERD/C/397/Add.1, para. 94).

92. Mr. THIAM suggested that inserting the word “recent” before the words “statistical data” would resolve the problem.

93. Paragraph 12, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 13

94. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that, in the first paragraph, the second sentence went too far and should be deleted.

95. The CHAIRMAN agreed and said that, in the second paragraph, the words “reconsider that approach and” should likewise be deleted.

96. Mr. de GOUTTES (Country Rapporteur) agreed that the second sentence of paragraph 1 could be deleted, but preferred to retain the second paragraph as written since the word “approach” referred to the situation described in paragraph 1.

97. Mr. THORNBERRY suggested that, at the end of the second paragraph, the words “against them” could be deleted.

98. Paragraph 13, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 14

99. The CHAIRMAN, supported by Mr. THORNBERRY, suggested that, in the last sentence of the first subparagraph, the word “only” should be inserted following the words “were classified”.

100. Paragraph 14, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 15

101. Mr. de GOUTTES (Country Rapporteur) said that in the first subparagraph the words “by the State party” should be inserted following the words “as a minority”.

102. Mr. ABOUL-NASR pointed out that it was not only the State party which did not recognize that minority.

103. Mr. LINDGREN ALVES said that what they called themselves was not as important as the fact that although they constituted a minority, they were not recognized as such.

104. Mr. THIAM said there were differing opinions about that group and the Committee was asking for additional information about them. He believed the paragraph should be adopted as written.

105. The CHAIRMAN agreed that the Committee should wait for additional information to be provided and adopt the paragraph as it stood.

106. It was so decided.

Paragraph 16

107. Paragraph 16 was adopted.

Paragraph 17

108. Mr. PILLAI proposed that the word “severely” should be substituted for “harshly” at the end of the paragraph.

109. Ms. JANUARY-BARDILL proposed that the phrase “any refusal of goods or services” should be redrafted to read instead “any refusal to provide goods or services”.

110. Paragraph 17, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 18

111. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that the second sentence of the first subparagraph was unclear. He questioned whether the Committee’s concluding observations should include such vague attributions as “it is reported that”.

112. Mr. THORNBERRY, joined by Mr. SHAHI, said that it was not clear whether the victims of the ill-treatment and improper use of force by the police included children.

113. Mr. de GOUTTES said that the police subjected the Roma community as a whole, including children, to ill-treatment and improper use of force. The sources of the reports referred to in the second sentence of the paragraph included the Council of Europe.

114. Mr. YUTZIS said that the formulation “some sections of the population” should be used instead of “the rest of the population”.

115. Mr. KJAERUM proposed the insertion of the phrase “particularly Roma children and youth” after the word “minority”.

116. Mr. AMIR said that “some police” or “members of the police” should be used instead of “the police” in the first sentence of the paragraph in order to make clear that not all police were guilty of the behaviour in question.

117. Mr. de GOUTTES proposed that the first two sentences of the paragraph should be combined and amended to read as follows:

“18. The Committee is concerned about information that members of the Roma minority, particularly Roma children and youth, are generally the object of suspicion, ill-treatment and the improper use of force by members of the police.”

118. Paragraph 18, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 19

119. Paragraph 19 was adopted.

Paragraph 20

120. Mr. ABOUL-NASR asked whether the practice of forced marriages was found only within the Roma community.

121. The CHAIRMAN said that it was a tradition within the Roma community for marriages to be arranged at an early age. He wondered whether it was the Committee's place to oppose traditional practices.

122. Mr. THORNBERRY said that it would be more appropriate to refer to "arranged" rather than "forced" marriages.

123. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that the practice of arranged marriages was common in many parts of the world and it was difficult to see on what grounds the Committee could oppose it.

124. Mr. THIAM said that the entire paragraph should be deleted, since a State party could not be requested to suppress a community's traditions.

125. Ms. JANUARY-BARDILL said that if indeed young girls were forced into marriage then that practice raised a legitimate issue of human rights.

126. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that the protection of women's rights fell more properly within the purview of another human rights treaty body.

127. Mr. SHAHI, joined by Mr. PILLAI and Mr. TANG Chengyuan, agreed that the paragraph should be deleted.

128. Mr. LINDGREN ALVES said that there must have been some basis in the report for the Country Rapporteur to have included the paragraph in his concluding observations. He cautioned that discrimination could be inherent in some traditions.

129. The CHAIRMAN said that, unless a compromise formulation was found, the paragraph should be deleted.

130. As time was short, he said consideration of the draft concluding observations would be resumed at a subsequent meeting.

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

131. Mr. RAMCHARAN (Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that, as a gesture of respect for their fallen colleague, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, he had come before the Committee to personally transmit to members the text of a letter that he was addressing to the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies.

132. The text of the letter stated that the High Commissioner, whose diplomatic brilliance and personal qualities were universally recognized, had fallen in the service of the high ideals of the United Nations. The staff of the Office of the High Commissioner would draw strength from his sacrifice and continue their work of promoting respect for human rights in a troubled world. That was how their fallen colleague would have wished them to act and that would be the most fitting tribute to his memory.

133. He wished to assure the Committee and all the other human rights treaty bodies that no effort would be spared to ensure that they received the quality of support services they needed to effectively discharge their mandates.

134. The CHAIRMAN thanked the Deputy High Commissioner for his visit and pledged the Committee's continued support for the work of the Office of the High Commissioner. The Committee would continue to do everything in its power to promote the effective implementation of the Convention by States parties.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.