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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Thirty-fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND PART (PUBLIC)* OF THE 4th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 26 April 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. BONOAN-DANDAN

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* No summary record was prepared for the first part (closed) and the third part (closed) of the meeting.

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The public part of the meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

- (a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (agenda item 6) (continued)

Initial report of Zambia (continued) (E/1990/5/Add.60; E/C.12/Q/ZMB/1; HR/CESCR/NONE/2004/8; HRI/CORE/1/Add.22/Rev.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the Zambian delegation resumed places at the Committee table.

Articles 13 to 15 of the Covenant

2. Mr. KERDOUN said that it was regrettable that the State party had not replied to the questions in the list of issues concerning the right to education and that it had still not withdrawn its reservations to article 13, paragraph 2 (a), of the Covenant on free, compulsory, primary education. He requested precise information about the outcome of the National Strategy Plan aimed at the realization of seven years of primary education by 2005 (paragraph 216 of the State party's report) (E/1990/5/Add.60) and about the mechanisms for continued and distance education which the State party intended to promote (para. 224). What was the exact school dropout rate in the country? It was worrying that Zambia's commitment to free, compulsory, universal primary education had gone no further than the adoption of a circular by the Ministry of Education, whereas a more binding legal text would really have been necessary. He urged the authorities to step up their efforts to pay greater attention to education, which was a fundamental right, to improve the situation of teachers and to reduce disparities in the school enrolment rate between urban and rural areas.

3. Mr. SADI commented that, despite its socio-economic difficulties, Zambia was striving harder to offer free education than to make primary education compulsory. It was therefore a lack of political will rather than of financial resources that was preventing the State party from withdrawing its reservations to article 13, paragraph 2 (a), of the Covenant. He wondered why attendance levels in secondary schools were particularly low and requested statistics on the number of university students.

4. Mr. MARCHÁN ROMERO, noting that Zambia had signed the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, asked whether the Zambian Government had availed itself of the flexibility allowed by the Agreement in order to guarantee the right to health. Furthermore, he asked what measures had been taken to give greater recognition and protection to traditional medicine. Lastly, he welcomed the introduction of a new national cultural policy in October 2003, but enquired about its main features and asked what percentage of the national budget was allocated to culture.

5. Ms. IMBWAE (Zambia) said that the Zambian delegation would like some time to prepare replies which were as precise as possible to the many questions posed by the Committee members.

The public part of the meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.