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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 24th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 29 October 2001, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Al-Hinai . . . . . (Oman)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

**Agenda item 115: Promotion and protection of the rights of children** (*continued*) (A/56/203, A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/342-S/2001/852, A/56/453 and 488)

1. **Ms. Afifi** (Morocco) said that, despite the progress achieved in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child and the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by nearly all States, the lives and well-being of children continued to be threatened by armed conflict, poverty, disease, illiteracy and malnutrition.

2. Malnutrition afflicted some 160 million children under 5 years of age and killed some 10 million of them every year. About 110 million children, two thirds of whom were girls, did not attend primary school and there were 600 million whose families earned less than a dollar a day. Some 1.4 billion people lacked clean water in their community. AIDS had orphaned 13 million children, while HIV infected 8,500 children and adolescents every day. According to estimates of the International Labour Organization (ILO), some 250 million children from 5 to 14 years of age earned their living in dangerous conditions and, if current trends persisted, the child labour force in Africa, for example, would reach 100 million by 2015. In addition, the number of minors under the age of 18 years forced into prostitution would exceed 2 million.

3. Children were most affected by the ever-increasing number of armed conflicts, since they were both the victims and the instruments of war. During the previous 10 years, about 2 million children had died in armed conflicts, 6 million had been badly wounded or disabled and over 12 million had been rendered homeless. More than half of the 22.3 million refugees and displaced persons were children, who were often prey to all kinds of exploitation.

4. Like other States, Morocco deplored the persistence of the disgusting practices to which children were exposed, such as the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. That scourge, exacerbated by the rise in new information and communications technologies, was a problem of the utmost priority which the whole of humanity had the duty to eradicate. The expansion of sex tourism and the rapid rise in requests for illegal adoption abroad, originating mainly in developed countries, had caused an increase in the incidence of kidnapping and sale of

children in their countries of origin. Deficiencies in the control mechanisms had led to the growth of networks of offenders and to corruption in many countries. As part of the preparations for the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, to be held at Yokohama, Japan, in December 2001, Morocco had hosted a forum of African Arab countries in order to facilitate the contribution of experts from the region to the outcome of the Congress.

5. Over the previous two years, the protection of children and the promotion of their rights had occupied a prominent place in national, regional and international preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on children. Its postponement could provide a stimulus for all parties concerned to redouble their efforts to build a world fit for children and characterized by a just and lasting peace, stability, tolerance, respect for human dignity and prosperity, all of which were indispensable conditions for the well-being of children and the promotion and protection of their rights.

6. The commitment of King Mohammed VI to the cause of children and other vulnerable groups, which had been for some time a national priority in Morocco, had raised awareness of the problems affecting childhood in the country. That commitment had been reflected in the five-year development plan for children for the period 2000-2004, under which a significant part of the State budget was being allocated to social development and education, especially the school enrolment of all boys and girls in rural areas.

7. Morocco, with the support of international organizations, had for many years been establishing structures and programmes designed to improve the situation of children. That growing interest had been reflected in a set of initiatives and measures in which the Government, non-governmental organizations and representatives of civil society had cooperated with a view to strengthening national machinery and institutions, including the creation of a Ministry for the Protection of Children and the Family; the establishment of a National Observatory for Children's Rights, a forum in which non-governmental organizations, government departments and experts could meet to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the establishment of a Children's Parliament, a permanent forum for dialogue and consultation between children of different ages from all regions of the country; the

harmonization of national legislation with international standards, a process that would lead to the elaboration of a children's code incorporating the laws affecting children and to the solution of other priority issues, such as legal codes on the family, nationality, criminal procedure, civil status and the protection of abandoned children; the adoption of a National Charter for Education and Training, establishing compulsory education for children up to 15 years of age; and the raising of the minimum age for employment to 15 years, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Convention No. 138, which Morocco had ratified, and the National Charter for Education and Training.

8. In addition, in 2000 Morocco had submitted its second periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and had ratified ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. In September 2001, Morocco had also ratified the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had deposited the corresponding instruments of ratification on 2 October 2001.

9. As an indication of its intention to contribute to the success of the special session on children, Morocco had established a national preparatory commission, which had organized various national and regional meetings and had actively participated in the various international meetings on that question. During 2001, Morocco had organized a number of Arab-African meetings for the promotion of the rights of children, such as the Arab Regional Civil Society Forum, the Summit of African First Ladies and the Arab-African Conference of Ministers of Finance. The documents, conclusions and recommendations of those meetings were annexed to document A/S-27/5.

10. Her delegation was convinced that, in addition to political will, mobilization of human and financial resources at all levels was the key to building a world in which children were considered a valuable resource and were invited to participate in the adoption of decisions affecting them and in initiatives designed to create a decent world for all.

11. **Mr. Sun** Suon (Cambodia) said that, 10 years after the adoption of the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children and despite some progress, much remained to be done in order to attain the goals of the World Summit, in particular to give all children the opportunity to have a good start in life, to complete a

sound education and to fully develop their potential. Poverty was the gravest obstacle to children's well-being. Pursuant to the Millennium Declaration, it was necessary to pursue the goals of the World Summit and of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocols, and to take new measures to eliminate the marked disparities in the conditions and quality of life in the various regions and countries. In that context, Cambodia was grateful to the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other agencies and non-governmental organizations for their commitment to the cause of children, and to the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session for its work.

12. The conflicts and human suffering that Cambodia had endured in conditions of extreme poverty had not prevented it from making considerable progress, with the international community's assistance, in compliance with its obligations flowing from the outcome of the World Summit. As a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Cambodia had given priority to the cause of children and to programmes geared especially to mothers and children. Following the 1996 World Congress and the 1999 National Conference, which had given rise to the creation of the National Council on Children, the Government, having decided to strengthen and mobilize its local institutions and communities in order to provide care for vulnerable children and protect them from exploitation, had approved a five-year plan to combat the trafficking in and sexual exploitation of children, and had implemented measures to stimulate national, provincial and community initiatives for the protection of children and to raise awareness in all sectors of Cambodian society regarding the rights of children and the dangers of their sexual exploitation.

13. With the firm support of UNICEF, the Government was successfully implementing the programme of work for the period 2001-2005, dedicated especially to women and children in Cambodia, in the context of the second socio-economic development plan. Furthermore, it had proposed a new social programme to address the problems of childhood poverty, illiteracy and disease, which would open the way to the creation of an educationally and culturally integrated and advanced society.

14. The Government, in fulfilment of the obligation it had assumed upon ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child, was doing its utmost to ensure

respect for human rights and to end human trafficking and exploitation through prostitution and obscenity. While notable results had been achieved by law enforcement bodies, Cambodia was particularly concerned at the tactics employed by organized networks of cross-border kidnappers and traffickers, including the use of addictive substances, to dupe or coerce children.

15. In accordance with the Secretary-General's initiatives, the Government of Cambodia, with the support and collaboration of all levels of society, had launched a national campaign focused on essential priorities for children. With the assistance of the international community and the Government, a series of child-health and education programmes had been elaborated, and Cambodia had rid itself of poliomyelitis owing to the success of a national programme to eradicate that disease.

16. Cambodia had participated actively in the work of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for the protection of children from maltreatment, abandonment and exploitation, especially child prostitution and child labour, and for the solution of the problem of street children and abandoned children. Cambodia had also decided to cooperate in programmes to combat child trafficking and international adoption. His delegation hoped that the new issues of alleviating poverty, providing access to education and quality health care and preserving the family would occupy a prominent place at the special session on children.

17. **Mr. Ndiaye** (Director, New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) welcomed the fact that many delegations had referred to the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the legal framework for the special session on children and that a rights-based approach had been taken to the problems of children. The Convention should be viewed as a springboard for the preparation of the future for and with children. He reiterated the appeal by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and by UNICEF for countries to sign the optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the participation of children in armed conflict before the end of 2001 and to ratify it before the holding of the special session on children; he urged all Governments to expedite ratification of the two protocols to the Convention.

18. **Mr. Ahmad** (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said, with reference to a statement by the delegation of Kuwait on various prisoners held in Iraq, that, as his delegation had observed in the debate on the item on the advancement of women, Iraq had released all prisoners in 1991 at the end of the war, so that the individuals in question must be considered as disappeared. Iraq, which had handled the matter in accordance with the norms of international humanitarian law and in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), had received a delegation from the League of Arab States to discuss the question of disappeared persons and had taken a number of initiatives in that regard. Iraq was willing to engage in dialogue with any delegation from the League of Arab States, or at the bilateral level under ICRC auspices, to find a solution. Further, more than twice as many Iraqis had disappeared in Kuwait as Kuwaitis in Iraq, and there were children who had suffered serious harm as a result of a situation which had continued for more than 11 years. His delegation trusted that Kuwait, which had not cooperated in the quest for information on Iraqi disappeared persons, would not exploit the situation for political ends. Iraq was willing to cooperate to find a solution to the problem in accordance with the norms of humanitarian law.

19. **Mr. Al-Anazi** (Kuwait), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that if Iraq wished to find a solution to the problem of disappeared persons, it would have to do so in the context of the relevant Security Council resolution. The resolution made no mention of Iraqi disappeared persons in Kuwait, but only of Kuwaitis in Iraq, and it was disquieting that Iraq should now make mention for the first time, six years after the war, of its disappeared persons. The aim was to sow confusion in the international community and avoid finding a solution to the problem of Kuwait's disappeared persons. His Government was ready to engage in dialogue with Iraq to resolve that unhappy situation, but it was difficult to do so since Iraq refused to attend meetings of the Tripartite Commission.

20. **Mr. Ahmad** (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Iraq had always made known its good intentions and attended meetings of the Tripartite Commission established under the ceasefire agreement until 1999, when one of the States members of the Commission had launched a missile attack on Iraq and when, as a result, the Commission had ceased to be a

neutral body. If Kuwait really wished to find a solution to the problem, it would show its willingness to do so in a neutral context, such as, for example, ICRC, and not insist on sole and exclusive recourse to the Tripartite Commission, a forum which in actuality it wished to utilize for political ends.

21. **Mr. Al-Anazi** (Kuwait), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Iraq had sought to sidetrack debate on the question and blame other countries. The Tripartite Commission had been established for humanitarian, not political, reasons, and his delegation saw no reason to make use of any other machinery, given that there was a current Security Council resolution on the matter.

**Agenda item 116: Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (A/56/206)**

22. **Mr. Ndiaye** (Director, New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (A/56/206), said that the goal of the Decade was to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health. He drew attention to the five specific objectives of the programme of activities for the Decade, adopted in General Assembly resolution 50/157.

23. The report provided information on the sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights working group on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (E/CN.4/2001/85), the nineteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/17), and the decision by the Commission to establish a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, and to appoint Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen (Mexico) to that post. The report also provided information on activities undertaken to promote the rights of indigenous people within the framework of the International Decade and the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations.

24. In particular, the report referred to developments with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2000/22, which represented a major

achievement for indigenous peoples. The Forum was expected to provide advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Economic and Social Council, as well as to various programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations through the Council; raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities relating to indigenous issues within the United Nations system; and prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues.

25. The Forum would comprise 16 independent experts, eight to be nominated by Governments and elected by the Council, and eight to be appointed by the President of the Council, following formal consultations with the Bureau and coordinators of regional groups and broad consultation with indigenous organizations. After the report had been drafted, the Economic and Social Council had decided that the eight government experts at the first session of the Forum would be distributed in the following manner: two from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, two from the Group of Asian States, two from the Group of Western European and Other States, one from the Group of African States and one from the Group of Eastern European States. The Council had also recommended that the election or nomination of members of the Forum should be completed prior to 15 December 2001. As at 26 October 2001 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had received 26 nominations from all regions for the eight seats set aside for indigenous organizations. The list of candidates and nominating organizations was on the web site of the Office of the High Commissioner ([www.unhchr.ch](http://www.unhchr.ch)).

26. The Council had also decided that the first annual session of the Permanent Forum would be held in New York from 6 to 17 May 2002. Some States had suggested the possibility that the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, which provided financial assistance to representatives of indigenous peoples wanting to attend the meetings of the two United Nations working groups on indigenous populations, might also support representatives to the Permanent Forum. The Committee might wish to give further consideration to that matter.

27. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had been pleased to work closely with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to organize events for the 2001

commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People in Geneva and New York.

28. The objectives of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People were ambitious but realistic. The establishment of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was an achievement, but adequate resources were needed for it to make a major contribution to policy-making in the United Nations. The High Commissioner had expressed her support for the preparation of the declaration on indigenous rights and stood ready to cooperate in that process.

29. **Mr. Heyward** (Australia) said that his delegation supported the establishment of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and asked what resources would be made available to it by other bodies of the United Nations system.

30. **Mr. Ndiaye** (Director, New York Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the budget for the biennium 2002-2003 contained an allocation of \$214,000, based on travel for members of the Forum to Geneva, but as the first meeting of the Forum was to be held in New York the Economic and Social Council had adopted a decision in 2001 to increase that amount by \$54,000. With regard to voluntary contributions, in its annual appeal for 2002, the Office of the High Commissioner had requested a total of \$205,000 to cover personnel costs for the Forum, but had not yet received any contributions.

31. **Ms. Rasi** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that the item on the programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People was especially important in 2001 owing to the recent achievements, and the challenges ahead, concerning the rights of indigenous peoples.

32. It was of crucial importance for the Permanent Forum to be funded under the United Nations regular budget. One of the Forum's major tasks was to harmonize a range of issues, including human rights, development, the environment and cultural and social issues, for the benefit of indigenous peoples, so as to ensure coherence on indigenous issues dealt with in the various forums and specialized agencies of the United Nations. It would be for the Forum itself to finalize the details of the scope and content of its mandate. The Nordic countries, which would follow the session with great interest, had decided to jointly submit the

candidacy of Ms. Ida Nicolajsen for membership of the Forum and encouraged other countries to submit qualified candidates in accordance with the Economic and Social Council resolution.

33. She congratulated Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen on his appointment as Special Rapporteur. The independent mandate of the Special Rapporteur would fill the vacuum that had existed in the Commission on Human Rights with regard to the situation of indigenous people. There was no overlap between the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and that of the Permanent Forum, which was quite different and very broad. The Nordic countries undertook to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur and to seek the widest support for his work. She encouraged all Governments to help him fulfil his mandate effectively.

34. Although the human rights violations and discrimination suffered by indigenous peoples might be similar to those experienced by minorities, the situation of indigenous peoples could not be entirely equated with that of minorities. Indigenous peoples were the original inhabitants of the regions in which they lived, and in some regions were the majority population. Their rights were based on their special relationship with the land and natural resources, which served as the foundation for their distinctive culture and way of life. It was a primary concern for the Nordic countries to develop the living conditions of indigenous peoples in such a way as to allow the survival of their communities and cultures; in that regard it was important to strengthen their human and institutional capacity.

35. Indigenous peoples were entitled to protect and preserve their own culture, language and traditions in the contemporary world, but human rights were universal and the same for all individuals and groups. As well as recognizing the human rights of indigenous peoples, it was also important to ensure full respect for the human rights of particularly disadvantaged individuals or groups within indigenous populations. Those individuals might suffer various kinds of discrimination on grounds of sex, age, sexual orientation, health, disability or other status. Indigenous women and girls needed special attention.

36. In order to protect and promote more effectively the rights of indigenous peoples, the Nordic countries were actively involved in drawing up a draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

and hoped that it could be presented for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly within the framework of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

37. The Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance had recognized the suffering undergone by indigenous peoples in the past. The Nordic countries supported the objectives of the Plan of Action adopted at the Conference and were ready to support all efforts aimed at transforming them into concrete measures.

38. **Ms. Paterson** (New Zealand) said that a historic milestone had been achieved in 2000 with the decision by the Economic and Social Council to establish a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, whose inaugural session would be held in New York in May 2002. If the Permanent Forum was to be effective, it needed the full support of Member States and the relevant specialized agencies, including the necessary technical and financial support. New Zealand welcomed the establishment of the inter-agency contact group under the leadership of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare for the first meeting of the Forum.

39. The appointment by the Commission on Human Rights of a Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people was another noteworthy event and New Zealand encouraged States and indigenous peoples to cooperate with Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen in the fulfilment of his mandate.

40. New Zealand welcomed the consensus on indigenous peoples that had been achieved at the Durban Conference, which had formulated recommendation to the Secretary-General to conduct an evaluation of the results of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and on how to mark the end of the Decade and provide for an appropriate follow-up. Looking ahead, the situation of indigenous children was a priority issue for New Zealand at the General Assembly special session on children. New Zealand was also pleased that the United Nations was encouraging the participation of indigenous peoples in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in South Africa in 2002.

41. As the end of the Decade approached, States and indigenous peoples should redouble their efforts to

elaborate the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. New Zealand had participated actively in the nineteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, at which the main topic had been "indigenous peoples and their right to development, including their right to participate in development affecting them". As a practical contribution, New Zealand had hosted a seminar on Maori development, in order to share its experience in practical ways of addressing some of the challenges facing Maori social and economic development.

42. At the 2001 World Health Assembly, New Zealand had again submitted a draft resolution on the International Decade calling on the World Health Organization (WHO) to make greater efforts to complete a global plan of action to address the disparities in the health conditions of indigenous peoples worldwide and to cooperate with and support the establishment of the Permanent Forum. Furthermore, since it was important that United Nations activity should deliver practical benefits for indigenous peoples, New Zealand supported the forthcoming review of United Nations mechanisms, procedures and programmes concerning indigenous issues.

43. The Treaty of Waitangi was the founding document of New Zealand and continued to guide relations between Maoris and the Government, which remained firmly committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Treaty and to reducing any inequalities between Maoris and the rest of the population. The strength of the Maoris contributed to a stronger nation overall. In 2001, the Government had launched its capacity-building programme to give Maoris greater control over their own development. It had also established the Maori business facilitation service to help guide and facilitate local Maori business interests.

44. To mark the second half of the Decade, New Zealand was focusing on the treasures handed down by ancestors, especially activities relating to indigenous culture and heritage, including language. The major human rights instruments had been translated into Maori and a bilingual booklet on the Convention on Biological Diversity would soon be published. In support of Maori language and culture, the Government was committing US\$ 176 million to a Maori television service over the following four years.

45. New Zealand would continue to explore ways of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters affecting them, both within the United Nations system and domestically, in the spirit of partnership that underlay both the Treaty of Waitangi and the Decade.

46. **Mr. Tian Lixiao** (China) said that, since the proclamation of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People in 1995, the United Nations had stepped up its efforts to protect and promote the rights of indigenous people. The previous year, the Economic and Social Council had passed a resolution in which it had decided to establish the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. It was the first time a United Nations body had consisted of both indigenous and governmental experts, which represented not only an important step towards the partnership that the United Nations was building with indigenous people but also a specific achievement of the Decade.

47. The Chinese Government supported the international community in carrying out the activities of the Decade and offered understanding and support for the reasonable demands and positions of indigenous peoples. On the occasion of the inauguration of the Permanent Forum, his delegation would like to offer the following observations as a way of voicing its expectations.

48. First, in carrying out its work, the Permanent Forum must bear in mind the particular characteristics of the issue of indigenous people, a specific question that arose in certain historical periods and in certain countries and regions, and which, unlike the issue of minorities, which all countries faced, owing to national, racial, linguistic and religious differences, did not exist in all countries and regions. Failure to make such a distinction would weaken protection of the rights of indigenous people.

49. Second, in its activities, the Permanent Forum must strictly adhere to the mandate given to it by Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/22. As an expert and advisory body, it should focus its attention on issues related to indigenous people, such as culture, environment, education, health and human rights, and, on the basis of its work, put forward policy recommendations to the Council and other United Nations bodies and agencies.

50. Third, the Permanent Forum should be aware of the need for a division of labour and coordination with other competent agencies of the United Nations system in order to avoid overlapping and waste of resources. To that end, the Forum must familiarize itself with the work of those agencies and, on the basis of that knowledge, determine its own priority areas and methods of work.

51. **Mr. Cordeiro** (Brazil) said that Brazil had learned by experience that societies benefited enormously from cultural diversity as a source of mutual respect and promotion of universal human rights. The Brazilian Government reaffirmed its commitment to the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, who numbered some 350,000, belonging to more than 210 ethnic groups in Brazil and speaking some 170 different languages, thereby creating a rich mosaic of indigenous cultures.

52. Contrary to what had been predicted in the fifties, the indigenous population of Brazil had not decreased since then but had grown steadily, owing not only to a higher fertility rate but also to a longer life expectancy. That trend had been reinforced by the abandonment of the ethnocentric views that had prevailed in the past. The new outlook was reflected in article 231 of the Brazilian Constitution, which recognized indigenous social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions and granted indigenous peoples "original rights" over the land they traditionally occupied. That meant that more than 11 per cent of the national territory, equal to roughly 1 million square kilometres, was reserved for the permanent use and enjoyment of indigenous peoples.

53. Enforcement efforts to prevent incursions into indigenous areas had been accompanied by educational and health programmes tailored to the specific needs of indigenous groups. In August 1999, the Ministry of Health, in partnership with non-governmental organizations and state and local governments, had launched a new programme to provide health care to indigenous peoples. In the field of education, a number of indigenous communities received schooling in their own language and in a way that was respectful of the social and cultural values of the particular group. According to the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, schooling for indigenous peoples must be differentiated, bilingual and specific, and, to that end, the Federal Government had supported the publication



of teaching materials in a number of indigenous languages and the training of indigenous teachers.

54. Brazil attached great importance to the implementation of the programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and was once again a sponsor of the draft resolution on the Decade. The most important decision taken recently in that area was the establishment by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2000/22 of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Given the importance of its work and the wide scope of its mandate, it was essential to establish a firm and predictable institutional basis for the Permanent Forum. In addition, the recently appointed Special Rapporteur must be given the necessary human and technical resources to carry out his tasks.

55. Brazil noted with satisfaction that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted the previous September recognized the need to protect indigenous peoples from all forms of discrimination. However, apart from the important provisions of that document, to which Brazil fully subscribed, the international community had made little progress in adopting international instruments on indigenous rights, and thorny issues had prevented it from making strides in the negotiation of the long-awaited declaration on the rights of indigenous populations. It was time for the Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights to take a fresh approach to the negotiations on the declaration, the adoption of which would provide a solid framework for the protection and promotion of indigenous peoples throughout the world.

56. The International Decade of the World's Indigenous People must be more than a symbolic gesture. Brazil hoped that it could become a turning point that would be remembered in the future for its achievements on behalf of all the world's indigenous peoples.

57. **Ms. Jenny** (Observer for Switzerland) said that the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People should culminate in the creation of a permanent forum and the proclamation of a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. Switzerland firmly believed that the text of the draft declaration must be compatible with the other international human rights instruments and incorporate improvements for facilitating their use by the general public and specialists alike. It was also vital not to jeopardize the

content of the current draft by summarizing the achievements of the Programme of Action adopted at the 1993 Vienna Conference and to prepare a universally acceptable revised text before the end of the Decade.

58. Regarding the Permanent Forum, Switzerland looked forward to the early establishment of the framework for an open and serious dialogue aimed at coordinating and proposing measures in favour of indigenous peoples within the United Nations specialized agencies. The framework would be an enduring instrument for perpetuating the Decade's theme of "Partnership in action". With its objectives and structure, the Permanent Forum was called upon to fulfil an important function in the United Nations system.

59. For practical purposes and for historical and symbolic reasons, Switzerland hoped that the Forum's meetings, or at least some of them, would be held in Geneva and that its secretariat would be based in the Palais des Nations. In addition to its traditional hospitality towards indigenous peoples, Geneva was home to many organizations whose activities were directly related to those of the Forum. Failure to take advantage of that network of synergies would entail higher costs, duplication of efforts, and dispersal of efforts and resources. One idea given favourable consideration was to support the establishment of the permanent secretariat and the possible creation of a House of Indigenous People in the form of a permanent delegation of indigenous peoples in Geneva. In terms of possibilities and requirements, those and other ideas would enable the Forum to better perform its important tasks.

60. **Mr. Knyazhinskiy** (Russian Federation) said that 2001 had marked a milestone in the implementation of the programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People with the Economic and Social Council's creation of the Permanent Forum through its resolution 2000/22. At its substantive session of 2001, the Economic and Social Council had decided to appoint eight experts before 15 December 2001. The Russian Federation, which had the largest indigenous population in the world, intended to play an active part in the work of the Forum and had submitted its candidature for election to that body, which would give real meaning to the Decade's slogan, "Partnership in action".

61. The Russian Federation welcomed the fact that focal points had been identified within the United Nations specialized agencies and that an inter-agency contact group had been created to take advantage of the specialized knowledge existing within the United Nations system in preparing for the first session of the Forum. It also welcomed the adoption by the Commission on Human Rights, at its fifty-seventh session, of resolution 2001/57, in which the Commission had decided to appoint for a term of three years a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, and the appointment of the renowned Mexican jurist, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, to the post.

62. Attendance at the nineteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights had set a record. Some 1,200 participants had offered contributions on the topic, "Indigenous peoples and their right to development, including the right to participate in development affecting them".

63. Indigenous peoples had become the partners and colleagues of countries on the difficult road to Durban. The World Conference had brought the international community closer to achieving the objectives of the International Decade and the Russia Federation looked forward to the early publication in Russian of the United Nations Guide for Indigenous Peoples.

64. International cooperation in favour of indigenous peoples must evidently go hand in hand with national programmes. The rights of small indigenous populations in the Russian Federation were enshrined in the Constitution and had been further strengthened by the promulgation of various federal laws that provided legal guarantees for the sociocultural and economic development of small indigenous populations, protection of their environment, their traditional lifestyles and their economy, and organization of their autonomous community government.

65. In order to create the conditions necessary for the sustainable development of indigenous populations, the Government of the Russian Federation had prepared and approved a series of federal programmes. Another new federal programme for the economic and social development of the indigenous people of the north, which was expected to run until 2011, had been

approved by decree on 27 July 2001. That programme envisaged a fundamental improvement in the quality of life of indigenous people in a market economy. The programme's objective was to create the conditions conducive to the long-term development of the indigenous people of the north, with sustainable development being interpreted as the transition to self-sufficiency through rational use of the natural, resource and economic potential of the territories of the indigenous peoples of northern Russia.

66. The slogan "Partnership in action" was a call to the international community to take new measures in support of its indigenous partners throughout the world.

67. **Ms. Siddharth** (International Labour Organization) said that, since its establishment, the International Labour Organization had worked on issues important to the lives of indigenous and tribal peoples. It had promulgated the only two international instruments dealing exclusively with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, namely, Conventions No. 107 and No. 169. The latter stated that "The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development ... and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development", making clear that indigenous and tribal peoples must not be mere objects of development but active participants in it.

68. Convention No. 169 was a comprehensive instrument covering a range of issues, including land rights, access to natural resources, health, education, vocational training and conditions of employment. An important aim of the Convention was to set up conditions for self-management so that indigenous and tribal peoples could gain greater recognition for their distinct cultures, traditions and customs and more control over their economic, social and cultural development. The Convention urged dialogue between national Governments and indigenous and tribal peoples and had been ratified by 14 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay and Peru.

69. The Organization's approach to the issue of indigenous and tribal peoples took two forms: firstly, supervision of the two Conventions and, secondly, technical assistance within that framework. There were

two technical assistance projects in that area. The first was aimed at promoting ILO policy on indigenous and tribal peoples, increasing dialogue, cooperation and understanding between indigenous peoples and Governments and enhancing the capacity of indigenous and tribal peoples to participate in and take responsibility for the processes that affected them. The second was the Interregional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Communities through Cooperatives and other Self-Help Organizations (INDISCO), which was aimed at strengthening the capacities of indigenous and tribal people. The Programme helped them to design and implement development plans and initiatives through their own organizations, while ensuring that their traditional values and cultures were safeguarded. Programmes were being implemented across the globe, including in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America.

70. Other ILO projects, such as those on human trafficking, child labour, crisis response and the development of cooperatives, had a direct or indirect impact on the special needs of indigenous and tribal peoples. Within ILO, an interdepartmental task force was elaborating guidelines on how to better implement and coordinate policy on indigenous and tribal peoples throughout the Organization, both at headquarters and in the 50 field offices. Those activities had revealed just how many of the world's 300 million indigenous and tribal peoples were marginalized in terms of their most basic human rights, as well as their economic, social and cultural development. ILO also shared the hopes that had been placed in the Permanent Forum and would do everything possible to contribute to the success of the Forum, in which indigenous peoples would also participate.

71. There was a remarkable commonality in the experience of indigenous and tribal peoples worldwide: loss of control over traditional resource bases, leading to the loss of traditional governance systems and customary laws for managing resources; loss of participation in decision-making that affected their lives; loss of valuable traditional knowledge of how to manage specific ecosystems and the skills and social institutions required for protecting and preserving natural resources; and political, social and economic marginalization.

72. Cultural values, social organization, spiritual values, political struggles and economic activity must

all be taken into account when addressing the aspirations of indigenous and tribal peoples. The latter sought mainly to live in peace and contribute to a better life and progress in the country where they lived, but that would increasingly require mutual respect, confidence and tolerance, especially in a complex and difficult time.

*The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.*