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### HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Sixth session

#### SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 27 September 2007, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. COSTEA (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

FOLLOW-UP TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIENNA DECLARATION AND  
PROGRAMME OF ACTION (agenda item 8) (continued)

General debate

1. Mr. XAVIER ESTEVES (Observer for Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union was following the events in Burma/Myanmar with great concern, particularly since the security forces had started to use force to break up peaceful demonstrations led by Buddhist monks and massively supported by the Burmese people. The Burmese authorities must respect the fundamental right to freedom of expression and association, and exercise the utmost restraint in handling demonstrations. Violence should not be used against people who were committed to non-violence.
2. The European Union was a strong advocate of tangible progress in the political process in Burma/Myanmar, including the release of all political prisoners and an improvement of the human rights situation. It deplored the fact that hundreds of peaceful demonstrators had been detained and held in appalling conditions. The Council should keep the situation in Burma/Myanmar under close review.
3. Ms. BERSSET KOHEN (Switzerland) said that her delegation was dismayed at recent developments in Myanmar, where peaceful demonstrators had been arrested and subjected to acts of violence. The Government of Myanmar must immediately halt all such violence, free all political prisoners and begin a dialogue with all sectors of the population. All members of the international community should use their influence on the Myanmar authorities to achieve that end.
4. Mr. GRINIUS (Canada) said that Canada urged the Burmese/Myanmar Government to show restraint towards the peaceful demonstrators who had taken to the streets to protest against the actions of the military regime. The Burmese authorities must engage in a genuine dialogue with the members of the democratic opposition and must release Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners. The Council had a responsibility to address the situation in Burma and to uphold freedom, democracy and the rule of law.
5. Ms. TOMIČ (Slovenia) said that Slovenia was following developments in Myanmar with growing concern. The Myanmar authorities must refrain from using violence in any form against the protesters and allow the full exercise of freedom of expression and assembly. The Government of Myanmar must engage in constructive cooperation with the relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms, allow for a broad and open national reconciliation process and release Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners.
6. Slovenia adhered to the holistic vision expressed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the indivisibility of all human rights, including the right to development.

7. Mr. SINGH (India) said his Government was closely monitoring the situation in Myanmar and hoped that all sides would resolve their issues through dialogue. As a close and friendly neighbour, India hoped to see a peaceful, stable and prosperous Myanmar where all sectors of the population were included in a broad process of national reconciliation and political reform.

8. Mr. VAN EENENNAAM (Netherlands) said that the people of Burma/Myanmar were raising their voices in peaceful protest to claim their rights, which had been denied to them for too long. His delegation supported their call for democracy. The Burmese authorities must refrain from the use of violence and respect the rights of peaceful demonstrators. They must immediately and unconditionally release Aung San Suu Kyi and other opposition leaders and political prisoners, particularly those from the group "Generation 88". As the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action clearly stated, when human rights were violated, the Council and its member States had an obligation to act.

9. Mr. NEYRA SÁNCHEZ (Peru) expressed his concern at the human rights situation in Myanmar and the violent repression of demonstrations in Yangon and other cities. The authorities' excessive use of force, the detention of peaceful protesters and the physical abuse of demonstrators were human rights violations. His delegation supported the visit of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Myanmar.

10. Mr. MINAMI (Japan) expressed his delegation's concern at the situation in Myanmar. His Government had called on the Government of Myanmar to exercise restraint and halt the use of coercive measures. The Government should solve problems through dialogue, taking into account the wishes of its population, and should also cooperate with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Myanmar.

11. Mr. DAHLGREN (Observer for Sweden) said that Sweden condemned the Burmese authorities' violent repression of the demonstrations. In the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, States had agreed that NGOs and their members who took part in promoting human rights should not only be allowed to exercise their rights and freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but should also be protected in national law. The authorities of Burma/Myanmar had the obligation to respect the right of all persons in that country to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. He called on the authorities to engage in a political dialogue with a view to ensuring that all Burmese citizens had the right to take part in the governing of their country.

12. Mr. STRØMMEN (Observer for Norway) said that the Government of Myanmar should take a forward-looking approach and begin an inclusive dialogue with the opposition and representatives of ethnic groups. Monks, religious leaders, student leaders and activists should not be seen as a threat to national stability. Norway condemned the gross and systematic violations of human rights in Myanmar and called for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees and political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. The Myanmar Government should respect its international obligations and cooperate fully with United Nations human rights and development mechanisms.

13. Mr. TIERNEY (Observer for Ireland) expressed his delegation's concern at the Burmese authorities' response to peaceful, legitimate protests led by Buddhist monks. The authorities had deployed troops and used guns, batons and tear gas to break up the demonstrations. The use of

physical force by the military against monks, nuns and unarmed civilians who had exercised their basic right of freedom of expression was absolutely unacceptable. Ireland urged the Burmese regime to respect its citizens' right of freedom of expression, and to refrain from further use of violence. He urged the Burmese authorities to engage constructively with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

14. Mr. MARTABIT (Observer for Chile) said that his Government condemned any action that prevented the free exercise of fundamental human rights by the people of Myanmar. He called on the Myanmar authorities to refrain from using violence against peaceful demonstrators. His delegation deplored the restrictions on freedom of thought and opinion that were being imposed on Myanmar citizens, as well as the restrictions that had been placed on their freedom of movement. The time had come for Myanmar to initiate a peaceful transformation to democracy. The first step should be to release Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners as a clear signal of reconciliation.

15. Mr. METSO (Observer for Finland) said that freedom of movement, expression, association and assembly were basic human rights. His delegation urged the authorities in Burma/Myanmar to exercise utmost restraint. The Government should be aware that, under international law, it was responsible for ensuring the right to life, liberty and security of person. He reiterated the importance of full cooperation with all United Nations mechanisms.

16. Mr. TICHENOR (Observer for the United States of America) urged the authorities in Myanmar to exercise restraint in the face of the peaceful protests. He called on the Government to undertake the unconditional and immediate release of the over 1,200 individuals who had been imprisoned for peacefully expressing their views. The regime should begin a genuine dialogue with its people, including the leaders of the pro-democracy movement and ethnic minority groups. The Council should take decisive action to encourage Burma to fulfil its human rights obligations.

17. Mr. CHANG Dong-hee (Republic of Korea) reaffirmed his Government's commitment to implementing the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. His delegation was deeply concerned at developments in Myanmar and supported the appeals for restraint on the part of the Government. The Government and people of Myanmar should proceed with the process of democratization and national development in a peaceful manner.

18. Mr. MACKAY (Observer for New Zealand) said that his Government was concerned at the reimposition of emergency regulations in Fiji on 6 September 2007. Since the military coup in December 2006, a number of human rights violations had come to light, particularly deaths in military and police custody. The uncertain situation in Fiji was compounded by the lack of an independent national human rights institution. The current leadership of the Fiji Human Rights Commission had compromised the effectiveness of that institution, which in turn had seriously weakened protection for citizens whose rights had been violated. He regretted that the Fiji Human Rights Commission had lost its accreditation with the Human Rights Council and had withdrawn from the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. He urged the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), through its regional representative in Suva, to engage with the Fiji Human Rights Commission in that respect.

19. He urged the Government of Myanmar to exercise restraint, and respect its citizens' rights, allow the peaceful expression of dissent and stop using violence.

20. Mr. REYES RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said that, in 2008, with the approach of the sixtieth and fifteenth anniversaries of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, respectively, the Council and all its human rights mechanisms should consider how to achieve progress in implementing the Vienna Declaration. The Council should focus its attention on the protection of special groups, including older persons; the progressive development of third-generation rights, including the preparation of a convention on the right to development; the recognition of international solidarity as a duty; and measures to ensure a safer environment and raise awareness of global warming and climate change.

21. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), said that the spirit of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action must be revived in order to fight the defamation of religions, particularly its most pernicious form - Islamophobia. The human rights community working in and around the Human Rights Council must help to develop political, legal and cultural norms both to combat religious intolerance and to reduce the consequent economic and social costs. It was time for the Council to start thinking about drafting an international convention on combating defamation of religions.

22. Fourteen years earlier, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had called for the protection of the rights of peoples under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation. In several parts of the world, peoples under foreign occupation remained disenfranchised, their freedom curbed, their human rights violated and their legitimate, sovereign political status denied. The Council should raise its voice in support of peoples under occupation. The Vienna Declaration called for the rationalization of United Nations efforts to promote universal respect for international human rights standards; that was still a work in progress.

23. Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Draft United Nations Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of Alternative Care for Children, said that the current text of the draft Guidelines was the result of broad consultation. Recommendations made by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child had culminated in an expert meeting in which the participants had agreed on the usefulness of setting United Nations guidelines on the issue. All regional groups should promote awareness of the draft Guidelines at the national, regional and international levels.

24. Ms. BASILIO (Philippines) said that, although the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action called for the realization of the right to development, to date that right had not received sufficient attention. She hoped that countries would work together to ensure that the right to development was accorded to the peoples of all States Members of the United Nations. Her Government was endeavouring to eliminate discrimination against persons with leprosy. The Council should pay particular attention to the silent suffering of such persons and members of their families.

25. Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh) said that there was a need for international cooperation to create conditions conducive to the promotion of human rights, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. It was impossible to talk about human rights as long as a significant proportion of the world's population lived in hunger and poverty. Greater political will was needed to make the right to development a reality. National action and international cooperation should complement each other. It was also necessary to improve development cooperation, create an equitable international economic environment and ensure that domestic poverty reduction strategies were mutually reinforcing. United Nations funds, programmes and agencies and the Bretton Wood institutions had important roles to play in that endeavour.

26. Mr. NÉBIÉ (Observer for Burkina Faso) said that Burkina Faso had taken many measures to promote a culture of democracy and human rights. Since government efforts were never sufficient to meet all human rights, civil society organizations also had an important role to play. Burkina Faso's efforts to implement the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, particularly in the area of economic and social rights, were hampered by a lack of resources. The international community should continue its cooperation and assistance in order to ensure the realization of human rights worldwide.

27. Mr. BESSEDIK (Observer for Algeria) said that, while the Human Rights Council had been established in the context of the reform of the United Nations, the Council's endeavours would not be fruitful unless the international community complied with the commitments made at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. His delegation did not understand why a follow-up conference to review progress made since the World Conference had not been held earlier.

28. Ms. MILLAR (Observer for Australia) said that her delegation remained seriously concerned that the independence of the Fiji Human Rights Commission had been compromised, and she joined the High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling on the Fiji Commission to play an effective and independent role. Australia also supported the establishment of an independent international human rights monitoring mechanism in Sri Lanka, using the good offices of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as a further step to address ongoing concerns. She urged the Government of Burma to exercise restraint and to ensure that international human rights standards were afforded to all of its citizens.

29. Mr. LOULICHKI (Observer for Morocco) said that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action highlighted the importance of human rights education. The Moroccan education system had introduced human rights into the national curriculum, and women had been encouraged to play a decisive role in that initiative. His delegation supported the Council's emphasis on equal opportunities and fundamental rights for women.

30. Ms. BAKKER (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) expressed support for the efforts of the Government of Brazil to develop the draft United Nations Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of Alternative Care for Children. No specific international instruments currently provided clear guidance for improving the protection of children deprived of parental care. Families were children's first line of protection, and effective child welfare

practices should aim to prevent separation, promote reunification, and provide appropriate short- or long-term alternatives. However, current practices often led to unwarranted separation, inadequate reintegration efforts, insufficient care options, inappropriate decision-making on care placement, and inadequate responses to abuse and neglect suffered by children in foster and residential care. She urged the Council to support the process of finalizing the draft Guidelines, which would make a significant contribution to the protection of children who found themselves without the care and protection of their families.

31. Ms. ROSE (Canadian Human Rights Commission) said that national institutions were bodies established under national legislation in order to promote and protect human rights. They were an indispensable part of a strong national human rights protection system, along with an independent judiciary, a representative national parliament and strong and dynamic civil society organizations. National institutions were essential to ensuring the rule of law, the administration of justice and respect for human rights. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action reaffirmed the important and constructive role played by national institutions and recommended the strengthening of United Nations activities to meet requests for assistance by States that wished to strengthen their national human rights structures. International support for the establishment and strengthening of those institutions was a key element for improving domestic human rights situations.

32. Ms. BRETT (Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers)), speaking also on behalf of End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) International, the International Foster Care Organization, the International Alliance of Women, the International Council of Women, the International Federation of Social Workers, the International Save the Children Alliance, the International Social Service, Plan International, and SOS-Kinderdorf International, said that millions of children around the world grew up without the care of their parents, and even more were at risk of losing such care. She hoped that the Council would support the General Assembly's adoption of the draft Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of Alternative Care for Children.

33. Mr. SIDOTI (International Service for Human Rights) said that the Council should continue the practice of the former Commission on Human Rights of considering the role and contribution of national human rights institutions on an annual basis and of supporting the establishment and strengthening of such institutions in conformity with the Paris Principles. He welcomed the decision of the mandate-holders in 2007 to extend and enhance the work of the Coordination Committee. The Council's agenda item on follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action should be used to enable an annual exchange between the Council and the Coordination Committee to discuss system-wide issues, concerns and challenges.

34. Mr. WRONKA (International Association of Schools of Social Work) said that the Vienna Declaration affirmed that extreme poverty and social exclusion constituted a violation of human dignity. In that connection, the Council should consider adopting a legally binding document and perhaps a convention for the abolition of extreme poverty. The Vienna Declaration also recognized the important role of NGOs in promoting human rights and humanitarian activities, and he called on Governments to consider providing more funding for

the many representatives of NGOs that attended the Council. Lastly, he said that freedom of speech could serve as a pretext for other dubious ethical practices with regard to children, such as advertising on children's television and the depiction of excessive violence in the media.

35. Mr. MACHON (International Commission of Jurists) said that the International Commission of Jurists deplored the recent arrests and detentions of peaceful protesters and political opponents in Myanmar as well as the large number of political prisoners. He called on the Council to condemn the Myanmar Government's continuing violations of human rights, which ran counter to the democratization process; to urge the Government to refrain from using violence to suppress peaceful demonstrations and to release all persons detained in the demonstrations, as well as political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi; and to encourage the Government to cooperate with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy and to allow the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar to visit the country and conduct his activities without hindrance.

36. Mr. GHALLAONI (Interfaith International) commended the progress that Morocco had made in developing the country and emancipating its citizens in the spirit of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. In particular, Morocco had established a mechanism to provide redress and compensation for human rights violations, ensured that women were represented in every State body, and adopted legislation to protect children's rights.

37. Ms. EBBI (Union de l'Action Féminine) said that her organization was endeavouring to implement the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. While Morocco had made much progress in the area of women's and children's rights, she was concerned at the precarious situation of many Saharan women and children living in the camps in Tindouf. She urged the Council to help to consolidate the rights of those women and children in order to enable them to live in peace and stability.

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY-BUILDING (agenda item 10) (continued)

##### General debate (continued)

38. Mr. PEREIRA MARQUES (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, and, in addition, Liechtenstein, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, said that one of the Council's main tools to help alleviate existing human rights problems was its ability to address human rights situations and to offer technical assistance and capacity-building with a view to promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Union firmly supported the mission of the High Commissioner's Office and the action that it was taking to build national human rights capacities. The growing number of requests for advisory services and technical cooperation showed that the United Nations and the international community had an increasing role to play in assisting countries to fulfil their human rights obligations.

39. One of the core elements of technical assistance was its voluntary nature. In that regard, the European Union reaffirmed the importance of national ownership of programmes. Another core element of technical assistance was the need for a structured process with benchmarks and



a time frame. Liberia, Burundi, Haiti, Nepal and Colombia were examples of countries where international cooperation to protect and promote human rights was producing satisfactory results. Cooperation and technical assistance must be based on a mutual commitment to common values, such as democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance and sustainable development. The European Union would continue its efforts to promote those values and to help the neediest countries to improve the lives of their citizens.

40. Mr. OMER LEBBE (Sri Lanka) said that the Council had a clear mandate to reconsider technical cooperation in order to avoid reverting to the practice of the former Commission on Human Rights, which had linked technical cooperation to resolutions that were usually imposed on developing countries. In that context, there was a solid platform for introducing a new development dimension into the technical cooperation of OHCHR and stimulating dialogue on cooperation in the new Council. Technical cooperation should be demand-driven and based on beneficiaries' needs, and should be provided in consultation with, and with the consent of, the Member States concerned.

41. OHCHR should emphasize the development of human and institutional capacities of all beneficiary countries. Activities should be supportive of poverty-reduction policies and the implementation of international development goals and the relevant recommendations of global conferences. The Office's capacity-building should focus on enhancing developing countries' capacity to formulate, implement and evaluate home-grown policies for the development of their national protection system, the design and implementation of promotion policies and strategies, and the development of human rights strategies within the framework of their development goals. Efforts should focus on national institutional capacity-building and on building national ownership. OHCHR should enhance and make full use of national expertise and institutions in order to ensure that national stakeholders were active partners in the design and implementation of activities.

42. Mr. SIDDIQUI (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), said that the fundamental principle for the provision of technical cooperation and capacity-building was that it should be at the request of Member States, since only Member States could determine their requirements for capacity-building and technical assistance. In providing technical assistance and promoting capacity-building, OHCHR should use experts who could address the different needs of different countries. The specific level of development and the cultural and religious context of the country concerned must be taken fully into account. When such sensitive issues were addressed, success in the promotion of human rights could be guaranteed.

43. The role of field presences was to provide technical assistance and advisory services to Member States requesting it. The only exception was when the Council decided through a resolution or a decision in favour of the presence of OHCHR in a particular country. Provision of technical services and capacity-building could also result from the universal periodic review process. Nevertheless, country and regional offices and human rights advisers required the prior consent of the host country, and the countries of the region should also be consulted. Country engagement was not a question of budget alone. The Council should have a clear idea of field presence activity and should approve the work of OHCHR in the area.

44. Mr. MOKTAR (Malaysia) said that, while technical assistance and capacity-building could play a very useful role in improving the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level, a number of principles must always be borne in mind. The main principle was the importance of ensuring that the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building was undertaken in consultation with, and with the consent of, the country concerned.

45. Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh) said that technical assistance and capacity-building was important for many developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, not only to help them to implement human rights obligations and commitments, but also to respond to the various demands of the United Nations mechanisms and treaty bodies. States were prevented from fulfilling their human rights obligations by various constraints, such as lack of financial resources or expertise. Since international support could help such countries to overcome such constraints, he called for the creation of voluntary trust funds for that purpose.

46. While the two terms “technical assistance” and “capacity-building” were often used together, the first referred to the transfer of skills and know-how, while the second referred to putting in place sustainable policy frameworks and processes. The Council’s objective should be to improve States’ capacities to ensure the enjoyment of human rights by all, and it should not try to impose, in the name of technical assistance, the values and cultures of one society on another.

47. Mr. BERG (Observer for Sweden) said that the promotion of advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building was a central element of the Council’s mandate to promote human rights through cooperation. The Council must ask itself how it could contribute to United Nations system-wide human rights mainstreaming, ensure that the outcomes of its work were reflected in funds, programmes and other bodies and, conversely, how it could identify gaps in, or newly arising needs for, capacity-building. One of the answers lay in the responsibility of member States to speak with coherent voices. Another might be for the Council to provide targeted recommendations to other bodies in its decisions.

48. One of the central tasks in the Council’s capacity-building work would be to manage the outcomes of universal periodic reviews. While the reviews could not generate overall plans for all human rights work in individual countries, they would have a crucial function both in providing general guidance and in identifying specific measures that complemented work being carried out in other bodies.

49. Ms. THOMPSON (Observer for Costa Rica) said that human rights education was an instrument for promoting values, beliefs and attitudes that would encourage people to stand up for their own and others’ rights. While that was a long-term undertaking, its effects would permeate the whole of society and play a major role in promoting equality and dignity for all.

50. The World Programme for Human Rights Education was an excellent mechanism for the promotion of human rights, since it provided a concrete strategy and practical ideas for use in schools, and a common grounding in the principles and methodologies of human rights education that would reinforce partnerships and cooperation between international and grass-roots organizations.

51. Technical assistance and capacity-building, particularly for local and national education systems, were important in that regard, and her delegation urged States, United Nations agencies and NGOs to support the implementation of the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

52. Mr. NÉBIÉ (Observer for Burkina Faso) said that all relevant international mechanisms should continue their efforts to assist State bodies active in the area of human rights. It was also important to strengthen the role of NGOs on the ground. The participation of NGOs in the work of the Council was an invaluable asset. All States and members of the international community had an obligation to cooperate and provide each other with the necessary assistance to improve the effective implementation of human rights. The Council should pay special attention to the specific needs of countries in crisis or experiencing difficulties in ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights. Such countries required lasting and balanced support in order to create an environment conducive to the protection of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights education was undoubtedly one of the best ways of promoting and protecting human rights on a sustainable basis. In that regard, States were entitled to benefit from the necessary assistance, particularly from OHCHR.

53. Mr. MARTABIT (Observer for Chile) said that the fact that many developing countries lacked personnel with training in such areas as justice, health or agriculture, or even in basic State administration, was a source of political, economic and social instability. Genuine cooperation to strengthen institutional, social and economic capacity was of great importance, and it was therefore necessary to renew those mandates concerned with technical assistance and capacity-building. It was also important to ensure that the cooperation provided by OHCHR was substantive and available to States.

54. Mr. FUJII (Soka Gakkai International), speaking also on behalf of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, Pax Romana, Organisation internationale pour le droit à l'éducation et la liberté d'enseignement, Interfaith International, the Association for World Education, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, the Women's Federation for World Peace International, the People's Decade of Human Rights Education, the Women's World Summit Foundation, the International Federation of Social Workers, New Humanity, the International Federation of University Women, the Worldwide Organization for Women, and the Institute for Planetary Synthesis, said that it was important to extend the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education since there had not been time for focused implementation and an extension would allow the dissemination and development of human rights education tools in all countries. OHCHR should work closely with all United Nations agencies through the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System in ensuring the effective implementation of the Programme.

55. Ms. PONCINI (International Federation of University Women), speaking on behalf of the Women's World Summit Foundation, the International Association for Religious Freedom, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Organisation internationale pour le droit à l'éducation et la liberté d'enseignement, Soka Gakkai International, the Women's International Zionist Organization, the Worldwide Organization of Women, the Women's Federation for

World Peace International, Femmes Africa Solidarité, the People's Decade of Human Rights Education, and New Humanity, said that education was a means of allowing individuals to develop their ability to understand what it meant to be a good citizen and to use their skills to relate to their surroundings. However, education and learning had to be exercised within a given context and a set of values founded on respect for human life and dignity, as codified in the International Bill of Rights. Promoting human rights education in primary and secondary schools through the World Programme for Human Rights Education would help to establish such a context. At those levels, it was also important to begin promoting gender equality and non-discrimination, as well as education for tolerance as a precondition for understanding human rights. Unfortunately, insufficient attention had been paid to the recommendations of the International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation to Freedom of Religion or Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, which had been held in Madrid in November 2001.

56. Ms. SACKSTEIN (International Alliance of Women) said that it would be a very long time before the children targeted by the World Programme for Human Rights Education would provide a critical mass capable of producing any quality outcome worldwide. There should be universal consensus not only to support the prolongation of that initiative but also to ensure that it had a permanent place among the tools available for the protection of human rights. The World Programme for Human Rights Education should be extended to all areas of life, including trade and international finance. The Council should consider ways of assessing the implementation of the Programme on a regular basis and integrating it into its consideration of State reports under the universal periodic review.

Mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (continued)

57. Mr. ROSHDY (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, requested that consideration of the mandate of the Independent Expert, and of the relevant draft resolution, should be deferred until the Council's next regular session.

58. Mr. EKANAYAKE (Sri Lanka), speaking on behalf of the Group of Asian States, supported that request.

59. The PRESIDENT said that the Bureau and the secretariat would accede to that request. The review of the Independent Expert's mandate had originally been scheduled for March 2008 and had been brought forward only at the insistence of regional groups.

HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES AND MECHANISMS (agenda item 5) (continued)

Review, rationalization and improvement of mandates (continued)

60. Mr. LA Yifan (China) said that the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of African States tended to support the idea of a holistic, coordinated and coherent review of mandates. It was not only a matter of reviewing the mandates but also of analysing and reviewing the whole system in order to avoid overlaps and proliferation and to bridge protection gaps. That would be possible only if all mandates were reviewed together.

61. Mr. SHALABY (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Council should take stock of where it stood on the review, rationalization and improvement of mandates. The representative of Pakistan had put forward a number of ideas on the subject. It was vital to establish a common methodology for the review of all mandates, with a minimum set of objective criteria recognized by all members of the Council. In the absence of such criteria, which should be applicable to each mandate, the Council might have to consider postponing its decision on certain mandates until its resumed sixth session in December.

62. Ms. Berset Kohen (Switzerland) said that the Council had spent months reaching agreement on its resolution 5/1. The text of that resolution provided a clear framework within which each mandate could be examined individually without losing sight of the overall picture.

63. The President said that there seemed to be general agreement that the review, rationalization and improvement process was under way. Draft resolutions had been tabled following consultations, and that process would continue. He urged sponsors and delegations to bear in mind the overall picture as they embarked on the review of each individual mandate. Decisions taken at the Council's current session would not condition any decisions that might be taken at future sessions. The terms of reference of a special procedure could be reconsidered when the mandate-holder presented a periodic report that revealed a need for modifications.

64. He would continue to consult with as many delegations as possible in order to establish how the issue should be dealt with. The outcome of the review, rationalization and improvement of mandates would be a set of broad principles to guide the Council in its work and ensure efficiency and transparency.

65. Mr. Loulichki (Observer for Morocco) said that his delegation had been informed that the texts of draft resolutions were being distributed only to delegations of States members of the Council. He wished to know how that was possible, particularly when non-members were among the sponsors of a draft resolution. Financial constraints could hardly justify such a discriminatory practice.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.