



لتنظّل الشعلة وهّاجةً - 保持火焰永不熄灭

Entretenons la flamme - Keep the flame alive - Не дать огню погаснуть

Que no se apague la llama

19th plenary meeting, 24th of June 1993

World Conference on Human Rights

Vienna, 14-25 June 1993

19th plenary meeting, 24th of June 1993

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Agenda Item 5. Appointment of the Credentials Committee

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

The 19th meeting of the plenary of the World Conference on Human Rights is now called to order.

Before continuing its general debate, the Conference will consider item 5 of the agenda "Appointment of the Credentials Committee; report of the Credentials Committee."

In this regard the Conference had before the report of the Credentials Committee as contained in document A/CONF.157/14 that was circulated yesterday. I wish to draw your attention to paragraph 11 of this report, which sets out a draft resolution recommended by the Committee to the Conference for adoption.

May I take that the Conference wishes to adopt this resolution?

I hear no objections. It is so decided.

Does any delegation wish to explain its position on the decision we have just taken?

The distinguished delegate of Belgium? You have the floor.

VAN CRAEN, Marc (Belgium, European Community):

Keywords: World Conference on Human Rights. Credential Committee - DOCUMENTS - ZAIRE

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In the absence of Denmark, who is current president of the European Community, and as representative of a country who will be assuming this presidency starting July 1st, I would like to make the following statement.

On the occasion of the submission of the report of the Credentials Committee and, in particular the adoption of the credentials issued on behalf of Zaire, the European Community and its Member States wish to state that they do not acknowledge the appointment as Prime Minister of Mr. Birindwa, which was made without the approval of the High Council of the Republic and, consequently, without this move forming part of the process of the transition as defined by the Sovereign National Conference.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the distinguished delegate for his statement.

The distinguished delegate of the United States of America? You have the floor.

SVENDSEN, Eric E. (United States of America):

Keywords: World Conference on Human Rights. Credential Committee - DOCUMENTS - ZAIRE

Thank you, Mr. President.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement just made by our Belgian colleagues. The United States accepts the report of the Credentials Committee and our acceptance of the report should not be understood to mean that we recognize the Berindwa government.

Thank you, Sir.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

Would any other delegation wish to take the floor?

This Conference has, thus, concluded its consideration of item 5 and will now resume its general debate.

Agenda Item 9. General debate on the progress made in the field of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and on the identification of obstacles to further the progress in this area and ways in which they can be overcome.

Agenda Item 10. Consideration of the relationship between development, democracy and the universal enjoyment of all human rights, keeping in view the interrelationship and indivisibility of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

Agenda Item 11. Consideration of contemporary trends and new challenges to the full realization of all human rights of women and men, including those of persons belonging to vulnerable groups.

Agenda Item 12. Recommendations for:(a) Strengthening international cooperation in the field of human rights in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with international human rights instruments;(b) Ensuring the universality, objectivity and non-selectivity of the consideration of human rights issues;(c) Enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations activities and mechanisms;(d) Securing the necessary financial and other resources for United Nations activities in the area of human rights.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I now give the floor to Her Excellency, Ambassador Mrs. Rhadys Iris Abreu de Polanco, Head of the Delegation of Dominican Republic. Excellency, you have the floor.

ABREU BLONDET DE POLANCO, Rhadys Iris (Dominican Republic), spoke in Spanish; text is edited based on the English interpretation:

Keywords: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS - CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES - INDIGENOUS PEOPLES - TREATIES - INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS - HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING - TRADE

Mr. President, delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, allow me to extend to you on behalf of my delegation our satisfaction at your election to the presidency of this magnificent and momentous World Conference and our full assurance that the work under your leadership will reach the goal we have set for ourselves.

I also want to thank the government of the Federal Republic of Austria for the welcome it has given us in this historic and beautiful city of Vienna.

Mr. President,

The framework of this World Conference on Human Rights constitutes the ideal setting for all members of the international community to question in a frank, sincere and open way the real situation of human rights in the world, the achievements accomplished and the appropriate means to solve the obstacles encountered in the past 45 years of the existence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This was a very opportune time to convene this debate on human rights in the world because situations involving the violation of human dignity, which we thought were behind us, have now arisen again and afflict the conscience of the world.

The war, with all its consequences of abominable and aberrant violations against the innocents, bleeds the people who are very close geographically to where this World Conference is being held, and there seems to be no end in sight to the madness.

Xenophobia, for its part, leaves its mark imprinted on the men, women and children of the countries of the south, who are forced to cross the seas that separate the continents in search of a better life.

The extermination of entire villages for the sake of unjustifiable ethnic cleansing; hunger in its crudest manifestations; violence of all kinds against women, children and the weakest sectors of the population such as the persons with disabilities, turn into outrageous violations of the most elementary human rights, which we must contemplate every day. But we cannot resign ourselves to accepting such realities shielding behind religious, political, historical or cultural pretexts; they have no place in a culture of universality of human rights.

Mr. President,

Since the conquest and colonization of America began, our Caribbean land has served as the stage for the defense of the inherent rights of the human being.

Our island is shared by two republics, where Brother Antón de Montesinos first raised his voice in defense of the rights to humanity of the indigenous inhabitants of our American land that is still theirs by right.

And this same voice of the priest, which still seems to be fully relevant in this year dedicated worldwide to the indigenous peoples of the world, asks those who violate the rights of so many men, women and children of our indigenous peoples: "Why? With what right?" This was how Montesinos began his famous Advent Sermon.

Mr. President,

My country, like any other country in the world, is not necessarily perfect in its fulfilment, protection and assurance of human rights enshrined in various international instruments

However, the international community has witnessed the great progress in the area while quite frankly there is a wide acceptance and respect of human rights recognized by the community of nations and by the agreements that have been reached at a regional level to ensure the essential rights of human beings.

My small country has not hesitated to sign and ratify most of the principal international instruments and regional conventions and treaties on human right, be they general instruments or agreements or on matters concerning the protection of particular groups, women, children or workers.

This situation in our country, where the human rights are respected, has enjoyed an important and increasingly valuable contribution from NGOs working in various human rights fields.

It is precisely these organizations that make the greatest efforts in everything that concerns the promotion and dissemination throughout the population of human rights.

Mr. President,

For my country it is unacceptable that almost half a century after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights we still have to advocate for the universal nature of such rights; or even more – that we are forced to define the concept of universality and the very scope of that universality.

That we should ratify in this Conference that neither geographical, economic, social, political, religious nor cultural particularities can ever serve as a pretext for ignoring the human rights, rights, which have existed since the very birth of the human race.

The community of nations, which advocates for the universality of all human rights, also demands that the promotion, protection and defense of these rights be carried out under the protection of the laws of nations without preeminence for economic, political, ethnic reasons or of any other consideration, thus, respecting the elementary norms of coexistence between nations.

The ratification of the universal character of human rights is an imperative in our days.

A mere declaration is insufficient.

It is necessary that all countries adopt and integrate the many instruments, declarations, resolutions and recommendations that have been voted on human rights, and that effective control mechanisms be implemented by the international community.

However, these control mechanisms would be equally inefficient if they did not go hand in hand with an action plan aimed at the disseminating and promoting the human rights, especially in the underdeveloped countries that lack the necessary means and resources to carry out such a project with efficient structures for such purposes.

To achieve this objective, Mr. President, it is essential for the United Nations Centre for Human Rights to undertake such programmes and projects, and for this they need more than one percent of the UN budget, which is the amount they are expected to work with at present.

My country is a stable democracy, and we believe, nonetheless, that without sustained and sustainable development guaranteeing human rights is a very difficult task.

In this sense, understanding the links between democracy, development and human rights, my country calls upon this forum and calls upon the goodwill of the developed countries that they through just terms of trade, they promote the creation of the favorable material conditions to enable human rights to flourish in a context development, freedom and democracy.

Mr. President,

The enjoyment of human rights cannot be made dependent on any kind of political or cultural concession or limitation, nor on any elements of national sovereignty or local legislation. It is an immanent attribute of every human being, in body and spirit, and should not be used as a subject to pressure to achieve certain political goals.

Tomorrow there will be no reason for a Madame Roland to call on the universal conscience, full of pain and frustrations, for dogmatic and political interpretations of human rights in any country in the world.

In order to achieve the objectives of this World Conference you may rely on the support of my delegation, Mr. President, aware that the recognition of the universal character of human rights, of the interrelation between respect for them, democracy and development and the interdependence between civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights is the guarantee of a more dignified life for every man, woman and child on this planet and of a happy coexistence among all members of the human race.

Thank you.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank you, Your Excellency, for your statement. I now give the floor, to His Excellency Mr. Mario Carias Zapata, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Honduras. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

CARIAS ZAPATA, Mario (Honduras), spoke in Spanish; text is edited based on the English interpretation:

Keywords: HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT - HONDURAS - GOVERNMENT POLICY-
LATIN AMERICA - HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Delegation of Honduras wishes to congratulate the President of this Conference for his election. We are convinced that he will be able to conduct the business of this World Conference on Human Rights, the first high-level conference on this subject to be held in the last twenty-five years and is undoubtedly a historic event because it enables the United Nations to play a more effective role in its activities to promote and respect human rights.

The United Nations Charter establishes as the foundation of the organization, that of "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person" and as one of its essential purposes "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion," provisions that indicate to all the Member States of the Organization that the promotion and respect of human rights are the very foundation of all the activities carried out by the Organization.

The delegation of Honduras believes that this World Conference, called upon to carry out an evaluation of the effectiveness of the means and mechanisms used by the United Nations to accomplish its task in the field of human rights, in order to improve them through creating new programmes that will strengthen them; it will also provide an opportunity for all states to reaffirm their

commitment to promote and protect individual civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of human beings, a commitment that they undertook on adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and through signing international instruments in the field of human rights.

It is true that in terms of human rights the present international scene has deteriorated in many areas of the world. We must, therefore, unite our efforts and to face situations of massive violations of human rights, which have been perpetrated against the suffering people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to whom we communicate our feelings of solidarity.

The Republic of Honduras, for its part, aware of its responsibility towards its own people in terms of guaranteeing them the exercise of their fundamental freedoms has not only incorporated in its political constitution all the declarations, rights and guarantees provided for in universal and regional treaties and conventions to which it is party but also, through its government, it is determined to further strengthen the policies and measures that guarantee internally the protection and defense of the individual rights of the people of Honduras.

The examples of these over the last decade are the recognition by Honduras in 1981 of the composed jurisdiction of the Inter American Court of Human Rights; the creation in 1987 of the interinstitutional Commission of Human Rights made up of different members from different public institutions in order to gather evidence in cases of human rights abuses and present them before the courts of justice; in 1991, with the creation of an office of professional response for the public security force as the body in charge of receiving and conducting investigations into allegations of abuses committed by police officers; and finally in 1992 a decree established a national office of a Commissioner for the Protection of Human Rights, whose task is to supervise the respect and fulfillment of human rights by the state and by private individuals. It deals immediately with any denunciation of violations of human rights and draws up prevention and development programmes in the field of human rights in the legal, economic, educational and cultural spheres and supervises the compliance with the international conventions and agreements ratified by Honduras. This office is in fully operational now. In this same year, 1993, the government of Honduras introduced a draft law to the national Congress to adopt new legislation for the Ministry of Internal Affairs that will cooperate with the judicial bodies to ensure the interests of the states, society and individuals through the exercise of the pertinent legal actions, observing the laws and promoting the investigation and the repression of crimes against human rights. This law provides for the establishment of a criminal investigation department under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior, coordinated by a civilian and not as previously by a member of the armed forces.

These measures, Mr. President, are part of the policies of the government of the Honduras for the protection of human rights as a result of a constitutional mandate that states that "the human being is the supreme goal of society and the state, and everyone has the obligation to respect and protect human beings;" and as a result of the implementation of international treaties, to which Honduras is a party, and the observance of the many resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly that recommend to the states the establishment of specific systems and mechanisms for the prevention, protection and defense of human rights in order to ensure their effective enforcement.

The government of Honduras, in order to be consistent with its policy, therefore supports all international efforts directed at improving the activities and mechanisms established for the protection of human rights and, in particular, as I said earlier, at a time in which this organization and we as Member States face very difficult challenges in this post-cold war world.

The government of Honduras believes that if the improvement of such mechanisms requires the creation of new procedures or institutions, the United Nations should not replace the existing ones or overlap with them. They should be complementary. We believe moreover that when these new mechanisms are developed, we must bear truly in mind the principles of international law and that they must be subject to approval by the United Nations General Assembly.

This Conference is approaching its end. It is still clear that there are difficulties in reaching consensus on the formulation of more energetic, perhaps more daring policies in the field of human rights, but we should not be discouraged. What is important, I believe, is that for the first time since 1948, and even at that time, two thirds of those here present were not yet independent countries. For the first time, we have been able together to come together in a forum in terms of equality and mutual respect in order to express our positions and explain our policies in the field of human rights.

The message of this Conference is going to be quite clear if there is no respect for the right of men, women and children, there can be no basis for collective wellbeing, for a fair economic growth, which is what we all pursue. Without international solidarity our tasks would be more difficult. Great responsibilities must be born for the effective exercise of human rights, and these are shared responsibilities. We can no longer ignore them. We must provide additional resources to the mechanisms which protect human rights in our systems, and we must in good faith provide them our fullest support.

The policies of Honduras, Mr. President, as has been demonstrated by the actions that I have briefly outlined in this statement are directed at ensuring the enjoyment of justice, freedom, culture and socio-economic wellbeing for all the people of Honduras. As is fit for a state whose social economic and political institutions are based on a democratic system of government. We are all working together in Honduras for the protection of human rights.

Thank you.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank you, Your Excellency, for your statement. The Conference will now hear several joint NGO statements. In this connection, I again appeal to each of the speakers addressing the Conference in the framework of joint NGO statements to identify themselves when they are given the floor and to limit their statements to no more than five minutes.

The Conference will now hear NGO statements from international organizations.

MEZHOUD, Salem (Joint NGO statement on slavery and slavery-like practices and exploitation of women):

Endorsed by:

Anti-Slavery International
Change
Coalition against Trafficking in Women
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
International Abolitionist Federation
International Alliance of Women
International Council of Jewish Women
International Council of Women
International Lesbian and Gay Association
People's Decade of Human Rights Education
Solidarity International for Human Rights
Soroptimist International
Young Women's Christian Association
Third World Movement against the Exploitation of Women
Women's International Zionist Organization
World Federation of Democratic Youth

Keywords: SLAVERY - MEN - WOMEN - CHILDREN - DEBT BONDAGE -
DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORK AND DESCENT - EXPLOITATION OF THE
PROSTITUTION OF OTHERS

Freedom and equality of all men, women and children are the most basic of human rights. Article 1 of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 26 August 1789 states that "All men are born and remain free and equal in rights." One century and a half later, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 in its Article 4 stipulates that "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and servitude shall be prohibited in all their forms."

If the word "Man" in the French Declaration was only used as a symbol for humankind, it was none the less ominous of the immense discrimination and exploitation, which millions of women and children are facing today all over the world. For we are yet to see the realization of the principles enunciated in one of the first modern human rights instrument and in one of the latest.

Millions of men are today in one form of slavery or another. Many forms of modern slavery are defined in the 1956 Supplementary Convention on Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, others are not and, yet, they exist.

Chattel slavery, one of the most execrable violations of human rights, can still be found in many countries in the world. Debt bondage has reduced hundreds of millions of people to a state of permanent and hereditary slavery. Most of them are in that situation because of tradition but many owe their bondage to the expansion of modern economy. New expanding industries call for cheaper labor and resort to entrapment into slavery.

People who face age-old discrimination, cultural stigma, traditional rejection, untouchables of various class, sexual, religious or ethnic categories are maintained in slavery because they belong to that particular category. For instance, entire ethnic groups are born into slavery, and untouchable children are born into debt bondage.

They can only achieve full enjoyment of their dignity as human beings if cultural, social and economic discrimination is eradicated.

But the most vulnerable of groups are women and children. Children cannot protect themselves and are sold into slavery sometimes by their own, often powerless, parents. Millions work as domestics in wealthier households, others as bus or taxi assistants, others in the carpet industries. They are all deprived of their childhood, beaten, famished, abused.

The girl-child is doubly vulnerable and victim. She has no control, or little control, over her own body, and she is sexually abused in most circumstances. Often, she is forced into prostitution. The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child must be strengthened and implemented.

There are millions of women trapped in slave-like and servile marriages, often from a very young age, who have little control over their lives, which are at the utter disposal of their husbands. Marital rape cannot be escaped because the capacity to initiate divorce is not allowed, and usually there are no opportunities for employment and economic survival outside marriage.

From earlier than dawn to dead of night, these millions exercise no right to leisure, especially those with children, and exercise no rights to rewards for their labor - even remitting any earnings to their families - and they are subject to arbitrary violence from their relatives from which there is no escape.

The massive and escalating sexual exploitation of women by local and global sex industries constitutes a fundamental violation of human rights and a barrier to women's equality. Practices that reduce women to sexual commodities have had a particularly devastating impact on women in developing countries. The sexual exploitation of any woman establishes a standard of treatment for all women. Existing international instruments do not address fully and adequately the problem of sexual exploitation. They must be strengthened and other instruments adopted.

International NGOs also call for adequate national legislations to combat sexual tourism, trafficking in women and other exploitative practices against women and children. International NGOs further call for contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary forms of Slavery.

Mr. Chairman,

This statement is endorsed by sixteen international organizations, and we now have, Mr. Chairman, further joint statements.

Thank you very much.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

Thank you for your statement. I would like to remind delegates that before they proceed to speak, they should identify themselves, their name and also their delegations. You now have the floor.

ROKOTUIVUNA, Amelia (Joint NGO statement on NGO access to the United Nations):

Endorsed by:

Anti-Slavery International
 Christian Peace Conference
 International Alliance of Women
 International Council of Jewish Women
 International Lesbian and Gay Association
 People's Decade of Human Rights Education
 Solidarity International for Human Rights
 Soroptimist International
 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
 World Young Women's Christian Association
 ZONTA International

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - HUMAN RIGHTS
 ADVANCEMENT – UN - TREATY-MONITORING BODIES -
 CONFERENCES/SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS - DOCUMENTS - COOPERATION BETWEEN
 ORGANIZATIONS

I am Amelia Rokotuivuna from the World Young Women's Christian Association.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to address the subject of NGO access to the United Nations. The presence of some 1200 non-governmental organizations at this UN World Conference on Human Rights indicates the widespread involvement and the deep commitment of this community in the monitoring, protection and promotion of human rights of all peoples of our world. The United Nations and its related agencies and the Member States have increasingly viewed the NGOs as valuable partners in the furthering of the United Nations Charter and all international human rights instruments as it has been acknowledged in document A/CONF.157/PC/98.

However, the NGOs can only be effective if the United Nations makes available the facilities for meaningful participation in the meetings of its relevant bodies concerned with human rights and in their ongoing work. In this respect, we wish to submit the following suggestions, which we believe will strengthen the cooperation of NGOs with the United Nations in the field of human rights.

1. UN World Conference and meetings of all its Committees should be open to accredited NGO representatives to observe and to make interventions when appropriate.
2. We welcome the UN decision to make this Conference accessible to national and regional organizations from all parts of the world. To secure the participation of NGOs who are active in the field of human rights in the United Nations' ongoing work in this field, we strongly urge that consideration be given to the creation of mechanisms that will accommodate this increased need.
3. We ask the United Nations to take cognizance of the fact that the number of NGOs working in the field of human rights has increased and urge that the existing arrangement under ECOSOC resolution 1296 (XLIV) pertaining to NGOs with consultative status should not be reduced. On the contrary, they should be strengthened and extended to all those who obtain consultative status.
4. Effective functioning of the NGOs requires the provision of support services for NGOs during meetings of relevant UN bodies. Such services should include office and meeting facilities, interpretation services, availability of documents in good time and adherence to agreed schedules of briefings. It is also urged that the United Nations provide adequate seating space for NGOs at its meetings.
5. The NGO community should be kept better informed by the United Nations about the functions and the ongoing work of the Treaty Bodies. We also request that consideration be given to formalizing the NGOs' contribution to the documentation of the Treaty Bodies. And on our part, we will attempt to use the facilities afforded us by the Treaty Bodies to their fullest potential.

We believe that the above will help us fulfil our mandate, perform our role as envisioned by the international community and make this essential partnership more efficient.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the distinguished delegate for her statement. Next delegate, you have the floor.

GAMBRILL, Otile (Joint NGO statement on the right to education, freedom of education, academic freedom and students' rights and human rights education as a human right):

Endorsed by:

All African Students' Union
 Asian Students' Association
 Asian Students' Information Centre
 Associated Country Women of the World
 Ethiopian League for Human Rights
 General Union of Arab Students
 International Council of Jewish Women
 International Federation of University Women
 International Student and Youth Movement of the United Nations
 International Union of Socialist Youth
 International Union of Students

International Organization for the Development of Freedom of Education
MOLISV, International NGO for Development
People's Decade of Human Rights Education
Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students
Romanian Independent Society of Human Rights
Soroptimist International
World University Service
World Young Women's Christian Association
ZONTA International

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - RIGHT TO EDUCATION -
HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION - UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)

I am Ottilie Gambrill of the Associated Country Women of the World.

Mr. Chairman,

We as NGOs would like to express our concern about developments and trends that have seriously affected and have led to a deteriorating state of affairs in education in many parts of the world.

In conformity with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the right to education must take place in a context of freedom and democracy. Education must be pluralistic and a result of a collaboration between the state and civil society as stressed by the World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, in 1990.

Education is of essential importance to the realization of all human rights and the processes of democratization. We are, thus, dismayed at the almost total lack of reference to the right to education in the draft final document of this Conference.

But certain major factors have undermined the right to education and educational freedoms. Structural adjustment policies and programmes have adversely affected the availability and quality of education. Several governments, through various means, have deliberately excluded significant sectors of their citizens from educational services.

Other major factors are the discrimination against women and girls; arbitrary dismissal of students, teachers and university staff; banning of students' and teachers' unions; closures of educational institutions; arbitrary arrests; killing or detention of university personnel; and the forceful sending of teachers to re-education camps.

We call upon governments to implement the right to education and to support NGO activities in the fields of formal and non-formal education.

We urge the World Conference on Human Rights to give adequate consideration to the improvement of monitoring mechanisms for the instruments guaranteeing the right to and freedom of education.

We recommend that the international community take concerted action to define a comprehensive framework for the realization of the right to education and educational freedoms. Such action should include an evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the conclusions of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All.

Human rights education is linked to the right to education and is by itself a human right. It is a prerequisite for the realization of human rights, democracy and social justice. We believe that learning about human rights at both formal and popular levels is essential to increasing understanding,

cooperation and trust among all women and men, racial and religious groups and, thereby, further the mission of the United Nations to maintain world peace and human security. It is crucial to the development of a human rights culture effecting popular participation in the national decision-making and development processes.

Resolution 1993/56 of the UN Commission on Human Rights recommended that the General Assembly take appropriate measures to declare a decade for human rights education. We support this resolution and ask that it be included in the action plan of this Conference. It is important that a specific action plan be adopted for the decade by the United Nation and its organs, in cooperation with national institutions, the NGO community and the People's Decade of Human Rights Education, which is a global movement with programmes in sixty countries.

The action plan should aim to familiarize people in every nation with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments through strategies and training methodologies with a gender perspective, relevant to people's daily lives, culturally sensitive and as an integral part of development. Special consideration should be given to the establishment of a fund for human rights education with provisions to support NGOs activities in this field.

We call for the World Conference to recognize that human rights education is a human right. The right to learn about your human rights is absolutely essential to the promotion and protection of all human rights of all peoples. Human rights education is a fitting legacy for this Conference to bequeath to future generations.

This statement is endorsed by twenty international NGOs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the distinguished delegate for her statement. The floor is open now to the next delegate.

SANDERS, Douglas (Joint NGO statement on lesbian and gay rights):

Endorsed by:

International Alliance of Women
International Council of Jewish Women
International Federation of Social Workers
International Lesbian and Gay Association
People's Decade of Human Rights Education
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
World Young Women's Christian Association

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - HOMOSEXUALITY -
DISCRIMINATION - SPECIAL RAPORTEURS - EUROPE

My name is Professor Douglas Sanders of Canada, and I represent the International Lesbian and Gay Association.

The rights of lesbians and gay men have received little attention in international human rights law. The United Nations World Conference on Human Rights may mark a turning point on these issues. This is the first United Nations forum to which organizations of lesbians and gay men have been accredited. As well, five states have condemned discrimination against lesbians and gay men in statements in the

Plenary, the Main Committee and the Drafting Committee. Our rights have been supported as well in the statement of the NGO Forum presented to the Plenary on June 14th.

There is still extensive discrimination against lesbians and gay men in many states including criminal sanctions for private consenting homosexual activity. One state both retains the death penalty and continues to execute homosexuals solely on the basis of private consensual sexual activity. Non-governmental death squads have killed homosexuals within the last year in a number of states. There are also recent examples of state interference with the rights of homosexuals to freedom of association and freedom of expression.

Nevertheless, there have been striking changes in attitudes in most parts of the world. This is reflected in developments at the state level, the regional level and at the United Nations.

Professor Danilo Turk in his final report as Special Rapporteur on the Realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1992 supported the need for the United Nations to begin to "devote increased attention to areas of discriminatory behavior generally ignored at the international level," specifically mentioning discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation."

There has now been attention to discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The European Court of Human Rights and the European Commission on Human rights, in three major cases, have ruled that criminal laws against homosexual activity violate the European Convention on Human Rights.

A majority of states now have open public lesbian and gay organizations. Organizations have been established recently in a number of states in Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia. Certain governments that were previously hostile to the existence of such organizations have come to see cooperation with homosexual organizations as essential to their public health programmes.

The changes are striking, and they are not simply occurring in the western region. It is important to recognize that in all major religious and cultural traditions there have been periods of acceptance of homosexuality and periods of repression. This is not a western issue: it is a test of our commitment to universality. When lesbians and gay men have been subject to repression, other vulnerable groups have been targeted as well. We wear the pink triangle symbol because it was the symbol used for homosexuals in the Nazi death camps.

As we come to the end of the 20th century, we all recognize that there have been striking advances in international human rights law, most clearly in the condemnation of racism and the recognition of women's rights. In this new atmosphere there is increasing recognition that lesbian and gay rights are human rights. It is primarily a generational change.

There are three sections of the draft final document of this Conference, which list grounds on which discrimination is unacceptable. Those lists occur in the preamble, in Article 8 and Article 20. In each of these places the words "sexual orientation" should be added as a ground on which equal rights must not be denied. We think the document should as well recognize that this is an area of discriminatory behavior that has been generally ignored at the international level and one which requires attention and study. The provisions in the document on the rights of women should expressly condemn discrimination against women on the basis of sexual orientation, a double discrimination that is unfortunately very common.

These changes would affirm a commitment to universality and recognize clearly that lesbian and gay rights are human rights.

This statement is endorsed by seven international non-governmental organizations.

Thank you.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I would like to thank the delegate for his statement. The floor is now open to the next delegate.

PACE, William (Joint NGO statement on strengthening human rights mechanisms):

Endorsed by:

Amnesty International

Human Rights Internet

International Alliance of Women

International Federation of Social Workers

Pax Romana

People's Decade of Human Rights Education

Sikh Human Rights Group

Solidarity International for Human Rights

World Federalist Movement (formerly World Association for World Federation)

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - UN. High Commissioner for Human Rights - HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING - INTERNATIONAL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS - INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS - HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS - INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS - INDIGENOUS PEOPLES - WOMEN

Mr. Chairman, honored delegates, distinguished guests,

Human rights are not written in the stars but are the invaluable results of tremendous efforts and often incredible sacrifice and suffering of tens of millions of people over thousands of years.

My name is William Pace, representing the World Federalist Movement and honored to be a spokesperson for the international NGOs on our agreed statement regarding the issue of strengthening human rights mechanisms for promoting and protecting all human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social.

High Commissioner

We support the establishment of an office of High Commissioner for Human Rights who have the independent authority within the UN system with the capacity to act rapidly in emergency situations of human rights violations. We urge that the Office is given the authority to act independently and in cooperation with other UN agencies to respond immediately to human rights crises including by sending fact-finding missions and reporting publicly on the situation.

Human Rights Centre and Resources

We call for the budget provision of the United Nations human rights activities to be significantly increased to comprise at least five percent of the current United Nations budget.

Special Rapporteurs

We recommend that Special Rapporteurs are provided with greater resources and authority to enable them to seek and receive information from governments and NGOs.

We welcome the recent appointment of a Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression whose mandate includes responding to attacks on human rights defenders.

We call on the World Conference to support the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on women focusing on violence and gender-based discrimination.

Early Warning

We emphasize the importance of human rights monitoring activity in alerting the international community to deteriorating human rights situations and to potential causes of refugee flows and internally displaced persons.

Multilateral Response

We recognize the right and obligation of the United Nations to respond in cases of human rights abuse, in particular, gross abuses such as genocide and ethnic cleansing. We do, however, urge that such a response should be appropriate, proportional and determined by a clear and democratic process.

Greater Human Rights Monitoring Activity

We call for the inclusion of human rights monitoring teams in all UN peacekeeping, peacemaking and humanitarian endeavors and emphasize the need for coordination between these areas and the human rights programme of the United Nations.

International Court

We endorse the proposal to establish a permanent, independent and impartial international penal court with jurisdiction to prosecute gross violations of human rights and grave breaches of humanitarian law including genocide, arbitrary killings, disappearances, torture, apartheid, war crimes and other breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

Advisory Services

We underscore the importance at the United Nations Human Rights Commission of not using Advisory Services to avoid public censure and examination of governments, which are responsible for widespread abuses or the application of other mechanisms by the UN.

Treaty Ratification and Treaty Bodies

We call for stronger mechanisms for encouraging ratification of human rights treaties and review reservations by States Parties.

We call for the elaboration of an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to provide for an individual complaints procedure.

Prosecution of Human Rights Defenders

We call for more to be done by the United Nations in ensuring the protection of human rights defenders and promoting respect for the activists of local and indigenous human rights organizations and community development workers.

International Financial Institutions

We call the World Conference to call upon the international financial institutions, in particular, the IMF and World Bank to work to identify links between respect for basic human rights - economic, social and cultural, civil and political - and effective and sustainable development and to act on these indicators towards full respect for all human rights.

Indigenous Rights

We support the adoption of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people and the promotion of its ratification by governments.

Women's Rights

In addition to the appointment of a Special Rapporteur mentioned above, we support the elaboration of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; to provide for an individual complaints procedure; and to call on all States to remove reservations incompatible with this Convention. We support the speedy adoption by the 48th General Assembly of the Declaration on Violence against Women and full implementation of its provisions.

No, human rights are not written in the stars but are as marble monuments in a desert of shifting sands. Without constant service, sacrifice and protection they can disappear in momentary historic storm as they have many times in the past. May our proposals and work at this important Conference serve to protect these rights for coming generations.

Thank you.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the delegate for his contribution. The floor is now open to the next speaker.

MOGWE, Alice (Joint NGO ecumenical statement, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches):

Endorsed by:

Baptist World Alliance

Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches

Conference of European Churches

Franciscans International

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers)

International Federation Action of Christians for the Abolition of Torture

Lutheran World Federation

Pax Christi International

Pax Romana

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

World Federation of Methodist Women

World Young Women's Christian Association

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - RELIGION - ETHICS - HUMAN RIGHTS - VIOLENCE - RELIGIOUS FREEDOM - WOMEN

Thank you.

My name is Alice Mogwe from Botswana, and I speak as the representative of the ecumenical organizations.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

We are honored to have the opportunity of addressing the World Conference on Human Rights. We represent twelve international church and global ecumenical organizations. The membership of this wide constituency, of many Christian traditions, lives and bears witness to the challenges of peace and justice in all the regions of the world.

In approaching these issues, the churches have acknowledged their historic complicity, at various times and places, in conquest and in discriminatory practices like racism and sexism affecting the dignity of the human person and community.

Long before the drafting of the Universal Declaration, human rights occupied a high priority in ecumenical witness and service. These deep concerns grow out of fidelity to Christ and out of the vast experience and advocacy of the churches in their struggle against the effects and root causes of hunger, poverty and other human rights violations such as torture and summary executions. Churches have actively pursued peace with justice as a primary concern to promote human rights. An important part of the churches' work has been to address the pain and the suffering of victims and to express moral and material solidarity with them. Despite despair and death, peoples of faith cherish a vision of a just, reconciled and healed society.

Mr. Chairman,

Today our societies are torn apart by conflict and violence. They cry out for a just peace. Churches have strongly committed themselves to the integrity of society and of creation based on the equitable participation of all members of society, including youth and the disabled. However, this puts heavy obligations on all God's people to live in mutual respect. We appreciate the Secretary-General's opening statement when he called for ethical standards and the need to focus on values as an urgent requirement in the respect for human rights. The setting of international human rights standards is not simply a legal concept but a fundamentally ethical one. The contradictions reflected in our societies need to be resolved. This can be done by deepening our understanding of the plurality and diversity that exists in our midst. The global community must strengthen humanitarian values by drawing upon the richness of the world's diverse religions, histories and cultures including those of indigenous peoples. Equally, there is an urgent need to address the international inequalities that impact on the enjoyment of human rights including the right to development. Human dignity cannot be subordinated to economic and political interests.

Mr. Chairman,

The World Conference faces a formidable challenge. It has to set in motion a series of steps that will defuse the present state of polarization and confrontation symbolized by the difficulties surrounding the adoption of the final Conference document. It has to develop a new approach to human rights based on a deep respect for human dignity that steadfastly proclaims and promotes the universality of all human rights. This approach must reflect the historical and traditional values of the world's many peoples. It is only this new view of human rights that adequately overcomes the obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights, particularly the right to development and economic justice.

Of urgent concern to the ecumenical community are the issues of violence against refugees and displaced people, of a dignity of women and of religious freedom.

The structural and societal violence being perpetrated against asylum-seekers, migrants, refugees and minorities requires immediate attention. The increase of xenophobic hostility, racist attacks and ethnic violence in many countries is a major threat to civil society. Cross-cultural respect and tolerance based on an ethic of the dignity of the human person must be articulated and promoted. New approaches are required to overcome socio-economic barriers in a world where most states are multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith.

The exercise of religious freedom and tolerance is inseparable from other fundamental human rights. No religious community should plead for its own religious liberty without active respect and reverence for the faith and basic human rights of others. Attempts to manipulate religious symbols and idioms to exploit and oppress people should be resisted. Encounter and dialogue among the faith communities will help discover, through the respective heritages, a common ethical ground for a new society where the basic rights of all are enhanced.

This year marks the mid-point of the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women. Following the United Nations Decade of Women, the churches have acknowledged that the contributions and rights of women are not sufficiently recognized. Arguments of culture, tradition, heritage and religion have often been evoked to deny women a life of dignity. Women suffer the most in situations where they experience the brokenness of life and community. During this Conference we have heard of systematic violence practiced against women. We have also been challenged by the strength, which lies beyond grief and powerlessness, and the demand to recognize women's perspective, history and culture as being a rich contribution to the understanding of human rights.

Mr. Chairman,

As we engage in reassessing human rights policies and practices, the international community must give a new direction to the United Nations system based on equity of participation. Any new understanding of human rights must be based on an awareness of the deep meaning of human community. Human dignity must lead to human solidarity, which cuts across all divisions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the speaker for her contribution. The floor is now open to the next delegate.

WCHR. Secretariat:

This completes the joint statements by the international NGOs.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

The Conference will now hear the joint statements from the Asian and Pacific region. You have the floor.

AZZAM, Fateh Samih (NGO statement from the Asian and Pacific Region on the right to self-determination, Al-Haq,):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - SELF-DETERMINATION -
DECOLONIZATION - INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman,

My name is Fateh Azzam, on behalf of over 140 non-governmental organizations from the Asia and Pacific region and on behalf of my organization Al-Haq from Occupied Palestine, I thank you for this opportunity to speak and air the following views, which are also supported in principle by all present at the NGO Forum.

Distinguished delegates, friends,

Much has been said in this forum and in other fora about reaffirming the universality of human rights and about the indivisibility of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Much has also been said of the interdependence of human rights, democracy and development. We shall not repeat such affirmations here, rather, we would like to forward the thesis that the source of and the spirit behind all fundamental rights is the right to self-determination. It is a long-standing principle of the United

Nations, articulated in paragraph 1 of Article 1 of both International Covenants comprising the International Bill of Rights.

The right to determine one's own life, in freedom and in dignity, translates in human rights law into the right to think and speak freely, to associate and to participate in the conduct of the public affairs of the country. It also translates into the right to initiate and participate in, and be a beneficiary of the social, economic and cultural development of the community in which alone the potential for personal growth and development can be realized.

Underpinning all human rights and fundamental freedoms is the quintessential concept of free choice. All individuals must be free to choose and must be free from any physical, mental or economic coercions that may negatively affect that choice regardless of the source of that coercion.

Consequently, if each member of the community can self-determine through the exercise of free choice, then the community and the people can self-determine their own identity based on the choices made by the collectivity and on that collectivity's own historical experience. The only limitation imposed can be that in the exercise of the right to self-determination others are not victimized. A scrupulous respect for the human rights of all also applies to the right to self-determination.

A people's right to self-determine, seen from this perspective, translates into that people's right to choose; it is essentially a right to democracy and political participation. It is the right to have a say in the identification of the community and in its political, economic, social and cultural development.

The international community has been debating for years whether or not self-determination, in the post-colonial era, always means independence. We submit, Mr. Chairman, that the post-colonial era has not fully arrived. There remain clear cases of peoples that are still awaiting the realization of their right to self-determination and independence from foreign and alien occupation and/or domination. We respectfully submit that the task of eradicating the colonial past is not yet complete. In these cases, what is needed is the non-selective and impartial implementation of international law in accordance with the UN Charter and Security Council resolutions, and the effective enforcement of States' obligations under multilateral treaties; especially those that protect and guarantee human rights.

The colonialist legacy, however, continues to survive in many other forms and in many regions. We are daily witnessing the fruits of this legacy in internal conflicts. We reaffirm the statement set out in the Bangkok NGO Declaration on Human Rights that the root cause of most internal conflicts in the Asia Pacific region can be traced back to the systemic denial of the fundamental right to self-determination. We define this right here, at the very minimum, as the right of free choice. In our multi-ethnic and multicultural region, the exercise of our rights to self-determination can begin to be realized through participation. No people, however defined, may be subjected to decisions and policies in which they did not have a voice.

The enjoyment and exercise of the right to self-determination; to choose and to participate in all decisions, civil, political, economic, social and cultural that affect a people, and the individual members of that people, is an essential requisite for the full enjoyment of human rights. The right to self-determination, Mr. Chairman, is the fabric that binds human rights, democracy and development.

We ask that a specific paragraph on the right to self-determination be inserted in the Final Document of the World Conference on Human Rights, and respectfully submit the following proposed for your consideration:

The World Conference re-affirms the right of peoples to self-determination, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Of special concern are the rights of minorities, including indigenous peoples, to freely participate and have a voice in all decisions that affect their lives.

The World Conference also reaffirms the right to self-determination of all peoples who continue to be subject to alien occupation and/or domination. The international community must confront selectivity and partiality in the implementation of the right to self-determination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and we hope that our concern will be reflected in the final document.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the speaker for his statement. The floor is now open to the next delegate.

NAIR, J. Ravi (NGO statement from the Asian and Pacific Region on refugees, displaced persons and forced evictions, South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - REFUGEES - TREATIES - INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS - FORCED EVICTION

Mr. Chairperson,

My name is Ravi Nair from South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre. I speak on behalf of Asian Pacific Non-governmental Coordination Committee and seek to address you on the question of refugees, displaced persons and forced evictions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The basic right of refugees not to be pushed back to frontiers of danger is often violated throughout the world.

The procedures established to determine refugee status are often inadequate and defective. Voluntary repatriation to the country of origin is not always guaranteed in conditions of safety and dignity.

Few countries have acceded to the relevant refugee instruments. This displays a reticence to recognize international human rights standards.

It is time to review whether the United Nations has been able to address this human rights problem effectively and whether or not the present instruments on refugees and their implementation mechanism are adequate to meet the needs of refugees. What effective measures can be taken to ensure that people are not forced to become refugees? How can we tackle those responsible for creating refugees do not benefit from impunity? What could be done to make governments provide relief and protection to asylum seekers? What mechanisms can be devised to ensure that governments respond in times of crisis? What further role can be played by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to meet urgent and emergency situations?

Mr. Chairperson,

It is very encouraging to note that the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has made the prevention of refugee flows a key component of their strategy. Yet, no single agency or government can accomplish this task. A fundamental feature of the refugee phenomenon in most of its manifestations is its inherently international nature. For responses to be adequate, solutions to the refugee problem have to be international as well. The Preamble of the 1951 Convention acknowledges that the granting of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries and, therefore, the satisfactory solution of refugee problems "cannot [...] be achieved without international cooperation."

In particular, we should focus attention on the monitoring on the application of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

We call upon all governments to ratify or accede to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. Likewise, we urge all governments to respect the powers and functions of the High Commissioner for Refugees based upon the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Mr. Chairperson,

We would also like to refer to the parlous state of internally displaced persons and those forcibly evicted.

Forced evictions - the removal, relocation and resettlement of individuals, families, groups and communities against their will is widespread and, as a consequence, the problem of internally displaced people is assuming great significance.

Many countries continue to experience the explicit use of the development planning process as a means of discriminating against certain groups through the process of displacement and forced evictions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The safety of internally displaced persons is often jeopardized by restrictive state policies and discrimination. The human rights of displaced persons are violated in the name of restrictive national policies.

governments must address this problem urgently and the United Nations must ensure that development does not result in forced evictions and displacement of those who are made most vulnerable by the development process. We would, therefore, urge the World Conference to recommend the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on forced evictions who could play a preventative role and be able to negotiate between the parties involved.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for your attention.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the delegate for his contribution. The floor is now open to the next speaker.

KUMAR, Corinne (NGO statement from the Asian and Pacific Region on women's human rights, Asian Women's Human Rights Council):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - ASIA - WOMEN - GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE - REFUGEES - RELIGION - DALITS - EXPLOITATION OF THE PROSTITUTION OF OTHERS

Mr. Chairperson,

I bring this joint statement by the Asian Pacific non-governmental organizations on women's human rights. I speak on behalf of the Asian Women's Human Rights Council supported by the Asian Pacific NGOs present at this Conference.

Mr. Chairperson,

In this intervention, we wish briefly to highlight the situation of violence and to suggest recommendations addressing the need for human rights protection for the Asian Pacific women.

We, the women and men of the Asia Pacific region, view violence against women as any action, policy or attitude, which causes physical or emotional injury and which is in any way a violation of our personhood or which diminishes us. Violence against women and the girl-child in the form of rape, dowry deaths, trafficking in women, the war crime of military sexual slavery or mass rape and domestic and reproductive violence is perpetrated against women in all regions of the world. We view such violence as a human rights violation, whether it is carried out in the private or public sphere by any individual, group or institution. All such acts of gender-based violence should be considered as crimes against humanity and the failure of governments to prosecute those responsible for such crimes implies their complicity.

In Asia, as elsewhere in the world, there has been a lack of societal recognition that violence in the private sphere - women battering, marital rape and incest - is a gross violation of women's human rights. Too frequently, the partner's use of violence against women is not only tolerated but also justified in the name of "culture." If we say that human rights are universal, we should set as an important indicator the way in which societies promote the position of women and children and indigenous peoples and establish respect for women's human rights within their own cultures.

In many of their countries of origin, the safety of Asian women is not guaranteed even in their own homes. There are very few service programmes such as shelters for victims and survivors of violence. Asian women lack legal protection from violence in the home due to the absence or non-implementation of specific laws criminalizing women battering. Blaming and silencing victims and survivors has deflected responsibility from the perpetrators of such violence against women.

Even after they leave their countries for economic, political or social reasons, Asian women frequently find themselves subjected to further oppression including the multiple oppressions of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, family status and age, to name only a few.

In recent years, traffic in Asian women has drastically increased and been exacerbated by government policies and the effect of the private market on economic development, tourism and migration, which have exploited women's cheap labor and sexuality. Traffic in women is presently effected through a variety of forms and malpractices such as the so-called mail order bride industry, sex tours, entertainment, domestic labor and prostitution.

During World War II, Asian women were forcibly and systematically conscripted to provide sexual services for the Japanese Imperial Army. Many of the survivors of this horrendous war crime have recently broken their silence and related their experiences and filed law suits against the responsible government. In our region, mass rapes of women have repeatedly occurred in conflict situations and yet to this day there has been neither redress to the victims, nor prosecution of the perpetrators.

In many conflict situations, women constitute the majority of the refugee or displaced population and are subjected to extreme oppression and sexual abuse. We urge the need to take measure to protect women refugees who experience violence from all quarters, even from those who claim to help them. There is an urgent need to redefine the term "refugee" itself. No country in the world recognizes the right to obtain asylum or refugee status on the grounds of sexual discrimination or violence against women. Woven into the matrix of the Geneva Convention and Protocol on Refugees is a clear notion of what is political, and violence against women is not seen as a political crime. We need to extend the definition of persons eligible for a refugee status to include the victims of gender violence and sexual slavery.

The abuse of religion by states and political forces in the Asian region has resulted in pitting people and communities against each other. Religious fundamentalism leads to intolerance and violations of women's human rights. Entrenched structures and practices such as customary laws, the family and

religion continue to discriminate against women. Women in minorities are particular victims of violence and discrimination. We reaffirm that cultural and religious specificities cannot be used to derogate from individual rights.

Dalit women in South Asia suffer from state violence and social and legal discrimination. These practices subject them to dehumanizing living and working conditions, a disproportionate rate of illiteracy and denial of their human rights. Furthermore, contraceptive and newly invented family planning devices not only fail to serve their needs but also violate their reproductive rights.

Women in the Asian region are subjected to reproductive technologies and family planning programmes on the premise that overpopulation is the major cause of poverty. These abusive technologies are frequently imposed upon Asian women against their will. Such practices continue to threaten and violate the rights to health and reproductive choices, particularly those of poor women.

We call upon governments to recognize and affirm the universality of women's human rights through the ratification of all human rights instruments, in particular CEDAW, and the withdrawal of reservations to any of its provisions.

We call upon governments to ensure that funding is provided for comprehensive services for women who are subjected to domestic violence in their country of origin as well as the country of immigration or refuge.

We urge the World Conference to adopt stronger measures against the perpetrators of sexual exploitation and trafficking. The World Conference should require states to adopt laws and policies to prosecute perpetrators and provide restitution, support and services to the victims and survivors.

We demand that governments address the war crime of military sexual slavery and mass rape committed against women in the Asia Pacific region, particularly those committed by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II. In this regard, we request that the United Nations investigate the crime of military sexual slavery and establish an effective mechanism to prosecute the criminals. Perhaps an international permanent criminal court? We urge the World Conference to address not only current cases of violations of human rights of women but also past cases such as military sexual slavery and mass rapes with the same vigor.

We urge the UN to appoint Special Rapporteurs on the human rights of women, violence against women and traffic in persons.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, in our search to make the UN system effective and meaningful to the millions of people in the region we will need to evolve the new terminology and mechanisms and create new power paradigms to promote the full participation of women, children and indigenous peoples and all those presently who live on the edges.

Women, Mr. Chairperson, have begun to shift the parameters of human rights discourse. We are finding new definitions, new concepts, new categories.

No one, until the women arrived, dared to describe these forms of brutalization as sexual slavery, or rape as a war crime, or the obliteration of communities of women as an act of genocide, or the recognition of the feminization of poverty, that poverty, indeed, has a woman's face.

But we are naming these crimes. We are giving these crimes their public and political face. We are seeking redressal and reparation.

The women in Asia urge the World Conference on Human Rights to recognize the need to seek new insights, to find new terrain, to create a new generation of women's human rights. We need to extend the notion of individual human rights and move towards an understanding of the collective and

community rights of peoples. We need to encourage the passing of a paradigm that has understood human rights as the rights of the privileged and the rights of the powerful. We need to listen to the voices of those who do not share that power. To see human rights violations through the eyes of the victims - victims of development, of progress, of technical fixes; through the eyes of the comfort women, of the trafficked women, of the Dalit women. Through the eyes of the women.

I thank you for listening.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the speaker for her contribution. The floor is now open to the next speaker.

CHUN, Soon-Ok (NGO statement from the Asian and Pacific Region on militarization and national security, Korea NGOs Network):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - MILITARY POLICY -WAR - DISARMAMENT - NATIONAL SECURITY - HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING

Thank you, Mr. President,

My name is Mrs. Chun Soon-Ok. I am representing Korean NGO network for the World Conference on Human Rights. On behalf of all the Asian Pacific NGOs participating in this World Conference, we would like to express our deep concern about militarization and its legal manifestation in the form of national security laws. We are convinced that these two are the direct antitheses of peace and human rights.

To our regret, militarization is escalating in the world despite the end of the cold war. Millions of people in various parts of the world are suffering from wars or live under the threat of war. The military use of nuclear technology is also increasing.

Militarization destroys civil society and undermines the basis of human rights. It harms the environment as well as access to education and health both, directly and indirectly. In particular, militarization fosters violence against political dissenters and vulnerable groups.

Militarization has many causes but here we would like to concentrate on one important factor, namely, the economic structure of developed and powerful countries. To a large extent, militarization and mass poverty in developing and underdeveloped countries are driven by the economic needs of developed countries with excessively large and wasteful weapons industries. We urge developed countries, therefore, to readjust their industrial and economic structures so that the needs and interests of their arms industries do not dictate their military, political and economic behavior.

Mr. President,

We also urge the United Nations to take all measures necessary for disarmament at national, regional and international levels. Furthermore, we urge all member States to cut military and intelligence budgets and redirect these resources to much needed social services.

Mr. President,

We would now like to address another instrument of human rights violations perpetrated in the name of national security. National security laws are the prime legal expression of militarized societies where a sense of emergency and war-mongering are constantly fueled and where political dissenters are labelled as national enemies. National security laws grant governments the extraordinary power to undertake quasi-military operations against internal enemies, even in peace time.

In effect, national security laws are used to silence political opponents and progressive forces including labor unionists and to intimidate the general public. Under these laws people are deprived of the right to dissent and the right to choose their own government, which are the fundamental principles of democracy.

International human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights have been inadequate in deterring human rights violations under national security laws. No international human rights instruments precisely define the terms and the conditions of application of national security laws. Thus, the term "national security" becomes a magic sack in which any human rights violations can be concealed.

We strongly urge the United Nations to institute effective international mechanisms to monitor and curb the human rights violations that take place in the name of national security. In particular, we urge all Member States to take measures to redress any wrongdoings committed under national security laws including the immediate release of political prisoners and the compensation and rehabilitation of victims. To this end, we specifically urge the Commission on Human Rights to establish a working group or to appoint a special rapporteur.

Finally, we reaffirm that national security, peace and human rights cannot be secured through militarization and national security laws but can only be achieved through democratization and social justice.

Thank you, Mr. President.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the delegate for her contribution. The floor is now open to the next speaker.

JIMENEZ, Cecilia (NGO statement from the Asian and Pacific Region on human rights, development and democracy, Philippines Alliance of Human Rights Advocates):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS - EXTREME POVERTY - EXTERNAL DEBT - DEVELOPMENT - DEMOCRACY - INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS - UN System

Thank you, Mr. President.

On behalf of the Asian Pacific NGOs and my organization, the Philippines Alliance of Human Rights Advocates, we thank you for this opportunity to present the final joint statement from Asia Pacific on human rights, development and democracy.

Mr. Chairperson,

We, the representatives of NGOs, which have response to the practical struggles of millions of peoples of the Asia Pacific, wish to intervene in this Conference with regards the question of human rights, development and democracy. We further express our collective concern on the impact of current development strategies as imposed by industrial nations and international creditors on the lives and economies of the peoples of the Asia Pacific.

Our position articulates the right of our peoples to life and to development against all forms of external domination. It seeks to restore the individual dignity of each person and the collective self-worth of each people as defined in the Bangkok NGO Declaration and reaffirmed by our concerted stand today in the World Conference of Human Rights.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the past three decades, debt-driven development strategies from international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF have imposed export-oriented, import-dependent and labor-intensive development programmes on Asia Pacific economies that have resulted in the massive plunder and rape of our resources and environment compromising the sovereignty of our countries, obstructing the liberation of our nations and the total and all rounded development of our peoples. World Bank-IMF impositions have created the massive displacement of indigenous and peasant peoples including women and children, dislocating their peasant economies and devastating their environment.

On the other hand, the cry for national liberation against poverty and hunger, against foreign domination, through the upsurge of popular, social and political actions has often enough been met with an iron hand, through military and elite autocratic rule aided and funded by industrial nations that benefit from the economic plunder of our lands. Indeed, the question of democracy and human rights are tightly intertwined with development.

National security laws are imposed to silence social and political protest legitimizing in turn the gross and systematic violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the peoples. Massive unemployment, poverty, hunger, cutbacks in social services like education, health and housing are consequences that result in the worsening of the quality of life in the Asia Pacific. As people mobilize their ranks in protest of these policies, repression and militarization increase.

With global economic recession pushing industrialized countries to protectionist policies and intense competition among themselves for the control and plunder of the resources of the Third World, the peoples and countries of the Asia Pacific have become vulnerable victims resulting in the further degradation of their human rights and their collective rights to development.

Only the peoples most desirous of social change and national liberation shall remain most steadfast in fighting for the full implementation of the fundamental rights to development and democracy. It is in their behalf that we, Asia Pacific NGOs gathered here today, present to you our collective call for immediate action:

We call on governments in the Asia-Pacific regions:

1. To accede to and effectively implement international human rights instruments, to protect international human rights standards and for this specific purpose those contained in the International Covenant on Civil and political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights.
2. To review and repeal laws, policies and practices which are detrimental to the full realization of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people.
3. To abolish national security laws that obstruct the civil and political rights of individuals and peoples.
4. To stop debt repayments and cancel all foreign debts that have been detrimental to genuine development.
5. To resist attempts by World Bank-IMF to impose their conditionalities on our economies.
6. To restructure international economic and trade relations based on the equality and mutual respect and cooperation among nations regardless of size, strength and ideology.
7. To restructure national economic relations in agriculture and industry on a people-oriented, environment friendly and sustainable development policy.

8. To institute genuine democracy and popular participation in the political and economic spheres of the society, community, national and international levels, and

9. To make drastic reductions in military expenditures putting an end to the arms trade with the diversion of military budgets to human development.

Mr. Chairperson,

The United Nations should adopt an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights to permit individuals and groups to bring their grievances on violations of economic, social and cultural rights to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In addition, all United Nations specialized agencies including the international financial institutions should conform with existing and future human rights instruments including the provisions of the International Bill of Human Rights, the Charter of the UN, relevant ILO Conventions and the Declaration of the Right to Development. A ruling should be sought from the International Court of Justice to determine the extent to which these institutions comply with the foregoing instruments and the objectives set forth in their own statutes.

Transnational corporations should be held accountable for human rights violations. They must be required to comply with international human rights standards and obey national laws.

Finally, we call on the United Nations to take the lead in a worldwide campaign to expose the impact of the policies of international financial institutions on human rights, development, environment and national sovereignty of developing countries and their implications for international peace and justice.

On behalf of the Asia Pacific NGOs, we thank you.

CLAIRE, Benjamin (President):

I thank the speaker for her contribution. I now give the floor to the Palestine Human Rights Information Center.

ALAMI, Rouquia (Palestine Human Rights Information Center):

Keywords: TERRITORIES OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL - PALESTINIANS - REFUGEES

Mr. Chairman,

My name is Rouquia Alami and I am from Palestine. Ever since I was born, I have been a displaced person together with my family.

I, like so many of my community, have never been allowed the chance to have a place that we call "Our Home." I will tell you my story.

When I was born in 1954, I was not born in my home city Lod. I was born in Nablus in the West Bank and my family were refugees.

My mother says that they were gathered in 1948 in a mosque in Lod and were asked to leave Palestine or else they would be killed. My mother, a young bride then, says that they walked for three days crossing mountains and hills. They were very thirsty as the temperature was over forty. It was July. One of our relatives was holding a six-months old baby who died on the way to the West Bank. My family moved to Jerusalem.

My father was helping the refugees in the refugee camps. Refugee camps were made out of iron, stones and wood. So often the strong wind in winter used to destroy the shelters. Till now after fifty years the situation of the refugee camps is no better.

Six years after the immigration, I was born. I was raised up looking forward to go back to my home. My grandmother died with her dream to return to her homeland unfulfilled. I was one of six children, my family had to live in Saudi Arabia for six years.

We returned to the West Bank in 1964. In June 1967, the war started. Once again, we found ourselves on the run, this time to Jericho. However, during the journey my father was killed in an air raid in Jericho City. I was thirteen.

My experience is the experience of many of my people. Since my father was killed at the age of forty, we have always been running, displaced and deprived of our rights to our homestead, to have our families together and to live in peace. We were left without support or direction. Once again my mother, like many women throughout the world in times of conflict, was left to bear the impact of the war and the violence.

We settled in the West Bank but our lives remain uncertain and our futures insecure.

Since the closure of Jerusalem, my mother is deprived, like many others, from entering the city and deprived of access to her relatives, to her faith and to her culture.

I, on behalf of women in Palestine, urge this World Conference and the Member States and the international community to understand the impact of their decisions on the lives of so many people around the world that lead to displacement, disruption and destruction of our very lives, cultures and families.

More importantly the very national and ethnic identity of the Palestinian people remains fragmented and rootless because we have been deprived of the land, of our mothers and of our history.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Change of the President]

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the speaker for her statement. The Conference will now hear joint NGO statement from the Western European and Other Regions. You have the floor.

BROWN, Charles J. (NGO statements from the Western European and Other Regions on universality and indivisibility of human rights, Freedom House):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT - INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

Thank you, Mr. President.

My name is Charles J. Brown, and I represent Freedom House, an organization based in New York that monitors human rights around the world. Established in 1941, Freedom House believes that effective advocacy of human rights must be grounded in fundamental democratic values and principles. Today, however, I am here on behalf of the NGOs of Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and North America who have asked me to discuss our common concerns about the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

Forty-five years ago, this body's predecessors gathered in Paris to proclaim a new era where human rights and the rule of law, rather than hatred and the rule of force, would serve as guiding principles. Their proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirmed that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," represented a conscious effort by the international community to reject the relativism that had resulted in the genocide, racism and xenophobia of the Second World War.

Were those, who inspired and framed the Universal Declaration, with us today, they would hope to find a world where everyone enjoyed the ideals that that Declaration embraced regardless of race, gender, color, religion, economic status, culture, ethnicity, national origin, language, opinion, age, sexual orientation, class, or physical or mental ability. They would find absurd the notion that the old bugaboo of relativism might once again be challenging the universality of human rights. They would reject as ridiculous the idea that some nations still believe that political and civil rights can be divided from economic and social rights.

Tragically, none of their hopes or beliefs reflect modern reality. Today, a full generation after the world rejected relativism as the province of racists and xenophobes, a new generation of autocrats is attempting to convince the world that cultural, religious, ethnic or other excuses can excuse intolerance and justify human rights violations. Today, a full generation after the Universal Declaration recognized the indivisibility of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, regimes continue to argue that economic development must precede the granting of political and civil rights. Today, a full generation after the United Nations worked with NGOs to articulate a common vision, certain states seek to implement apartheid within the UN system denying to NGO representatives the very right this Conference was called to celebrate and defend.

The Western and other NGOs reject these attempts to place limits on human rights and reaffirm our commitment to the universality. We reject any attempt to resuscitate relativism as a justification for human rights abuses. We believe that the language of the draft declaration as it now stands may endanger the long-cherished principles of universality and indivisibility. To this end, we propose that Paragraph 1 of the declaration of the World Conference read as follows:

The World Conference on Human Rights reaffirms the universality and indivisibility of human rights as embodied in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. As Member States of the United Nations, we reject any effort to use cultural, political or economic relativism as a justification for the abuse of human rights.

The Western NGOs believe that political and civil rights and economic, social and cultural rights are indivisible. We believe that the right to development has both an economic and political dimension, and we applaud those who seek to promote an integrated approach to economic, social, cultural and political development through which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized. Those who attempt to ignore any of these rights under the pretext that the full enjoyment of other rights is not yet possible must not succeed in using this Conference as a forum to justify intolerance. To this end, we propose the following as Paragraph 2 of the declaration:

The World Conference rejects any effort to separate civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. As Member States of the United Nations, we recognize the indivisibility of human rights and recognize that no state, group or person has the right to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of these rights.

The Western NGOs welcome and support the idea that the defense and strengthening of democracy constitute the best guarantee of all human rights. Genuine democracy does not end with elections; it also includes a vibrant civil society, respect for the rule of law and universal participation and representation. Democracy can and ought to be assimilated by all peoples and cultures. It has a universal dimension. To this end, we propose that Paragraph 3 of the declaration read as follows:

The World Conference on Human Rights recognizes that democracy and democratic institutions, including free and fair elections, a vibrant civil society, respect for the rule of law and a process that permits participation by all elements of society, represent the best guarantee of the effective enjoyment of all human rights.

The Western NGOs call on all governments to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which along with the Universal Declaration serve as an International Bill of Human Rights. To this end, we propose that the declaration include as Paragraph 4 a pledge to ratify both Covenants by all states by the year 2000.

In conclusion, Mr. President, it is not too late to return to the legacy of the Universal Declaration. By embracing the universality and indivisibility of human rights, we can stop those who seek to enshrine human rights violations and codify intolerant behavior. If we fail to act, we not only will give comfort to dictators but we also will disappoint the millions who look to us to assure that future generations will be born "free and equal in dignity and rights."

Thank you, Mr. President.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the speaker for his statement. The floor is open to the next speaker. You have the floor.

SHAUGHNESSY, Louise (NGO statements from the Western European and Other Regions on vulnerable groups, National Association of Women and the Law):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - DISCRIMINATION - SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED PERSONS - WOMEN - MIGRANT WORKERS - RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE - HOMOSEXUALITY

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

My name is Louse Shaughnessy. I am with national association of Women in the Law of Canada, and I have been asked to speak to you today on behalf of NGOs from Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand on the subject of vulnerable groups. We have decided to touch upon this topic precisely because the vulnerability of these groups is in large part due to their invisibility in United Nations fora.

The term "vulnerable" is used to put into one bundle all of those groups states find it convenient not to identify including domestic workers, lesbians and gays, those with disabilities, the elderly, minorities and victims of religious intolerance. These are the groups without conventions to protect and promote their rights. There are others such as women and migrant workers who, although having their rights entrenched in conventions, cannot rely on mechanisms to effectively enforce those rights.

All of these groups, all over the world, suffer discrimination, sometimes overt but more often in very subtle ways through systemic discrimination. Given the subtlety of the discrimination added to the

invisibility of the victims of this discrimination, these injustices often go completely unnoticed by those in positions of privilege. As a result, ironically, those most oppressed are the least protected.

Systemic discrimination may be described as discrimination, which is institutionalized in the policies, procedures, organizations and structures of society. It is particularly insidious in that once discrimination becomes deeply entrenched in laws and attitudes it becomes regarded as the norm, the accepted and natural societal order. Moreover, it can result in such an interlocking web of routinely discriminatory laws, policies and institutions that those who perpetuate the situation are frequently blind to the whole superstructure.

It may honestly not occur to those who do not experience this marginalization that women are equally competent in the workplace, that different cultural norms may be equally valid and that not every relationship is heterosexual. In this way, the status quo is used to perpetuate existing inequalities. It is only those who are experiencing the discrimination, who can see that this is simply an appeal to the discrimination of the past to justify the discrimination of the future.

For example, the Western NGOs recognize that the oppression of women is, to our shame, deeply rooted in our own societal structures. For centuries, women have been ascribed a particular, inferior role. Up until very recently, women were denied the right to vote, we were viewed as the property of our husbands upon marriage, we had no capacity to enter into contracts, we could not in law be raped by our husbands.

In order to redress discrimination, it is necessary to listen to the voices of those affected by it. Yet this can be difficult since it is often those most oppressed whose voice is the weakest and, thus, the least likely to be heard.

There are many at this Conference whose voices are not being heard, too many to name, and if we have time to identify but a few examples it should in no way detract from the just claims of all those not mentioned who look to the international community for recognition of their right to equality.

In the developing world, many migrant workers find themselves exploited, forced to work in unacceptable conditions facing language barriers, discrimination and xenophobia, with inadequate redress or union support and a lack of social services. Women migrant workers are multiply disadvantaged and face in addition sexual exploitation, abuse and the risk that they will be forced into sex-trafficking rings.

Religious intolerance is another area, which has not yet received adequate attention. Such intolerance has led and continues to lead to some of the most degrading violations of human rights. Intolerance is often founded on ignorance. Education is a key element in building a more just society, and we, therefore, look to 1995 as International Year of Tolerance as a key step towards the goal of peace.

Another voice that has not been strongly heard at this Conference is the voice of lesbians and gays. In many countries, lesbians and gays are prohibited from forming organizations or speaking out and are subject to criminal sanctions, torture or even the death penalty. As a result, those who face the worst abuses are not able to be here to tell their story and are dependent upon the international community to ensure that they obtain recognition of the rights they are being denied. Lesbians and gays are constantly treated as inferior human beings, and many states refuse to even recognize that they are entitled to rely upon all human rights guarantees without discrimination. A person's sexuality is a fundamental aspect of their personhood, and it is unacceptable to accord lesbians and gays anything less than full equality in all aspects of their lives. 1994 is International Year of the Family and we call upon the international community to give recognition to the family relationships of lesbians and gays so that we may recognize and celebrate the diversify of the many different family forms, which make up our communities.

In addition, we affirm the need for strong implementation mechanisms to ensure that all people's rights are adequately respected.

The international community has a responsibility to address the needs of those who are disempowered in an effective way. We call upon you to listen to the voices of those vulnerable groups and, once and for all, put an end to the silence that has made them invisible.

Thank you.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the speaker for her statement. The floor is open to the next speaker.

BRODY, Reed (NGO statement from the Western European and Other Regions on strengthening UN mechanisms to protect and promote human rights, International Human Rights Law Group):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS - HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING - WOMEN - PEACEBUILDING - UN. High Commissioner for Human Rights - ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS -TREATIES - INTERNATIONAL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

My name is Reed Brody. I am the director of the International Human Rights Law Group, and I speak on behalf of the WEO NGOs on strengthening UN mechanisms to protect and promote human rights.

As the UN holds its Second World Conference, less than 400 kilometers from the worst carnage in Europe since the Second World War, the challenges facing this Organization could not be clear. Despite significant progress in the field of human rights, the UN is unable to prevent or stop gross abuses. This failure can be traced to a lack of political will and to ineffective institutions.

Some of today's worst crises might have been prevented had Member States been willing to respond to evidence of massive violations. Similarly, Member States have been silent about government violations on whole categories of rights, like the right to health and the right to housing. Indeed, until this World Conference they have been largely unwilling to speak of government's accountability for violations of the human rights of women, half of the world's population.

Even where the will to halt violations exists, the means have fallen short on several fronts.

First, the UN's capacity to act in emergency situations involving gross violations is far too constrained, structurally and politically. The new procedure for convening emergency sessions of the Commission is important but does not close the gap between notice of gross violations and effective actions to stop them. Moreover, the Commission's monitoring procedures have minimal deterrent effect. Onsite monitoring as a means of preventing violations should be expanded. The presence of the UN human rights officers in UNOSAL and UNTAC has had an important deterrent effect, and the UN Centre for Human Rights will assume an operational presence following UNTAC's departure. Two of the Commission's Special Rapporteurs have been given the assistance of onsite monitors in the countries they visit.

We urge the permanent onsite monitors be deployed whenever a country rapporteur is appointed, and, as suggested by the independent experts in their report, UN country missions should include a staff person responsible for collecting information on human rights and providing early warning.

Second, as part of its peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, the UN should develop policy and operational guidelines for preventing and responding to abuses of women's human rights including gender-based violence. Reports of sexual harassment by UN personnel in several field operations point to the need for training and supervision to prevent such abuses.

In the area of election monitoring, the UN should develop guidelines for increasing women's participation in the political process and their active involvement in building national institutions.

Third, the clear need for leadership in human rights and a means of responding effectively and rapidly to serious violations could be answered in part by the creation of a high level independent High Commissioner for Human Rights. The High Commissioner should coordinate UN action in response to human rights emergencies and ensure the integration of human rights concerns throughout the full range of UN activities including its peacebuilding operations. He or she should also oversee the full integration of women's human rights into the UN human rights programme, development assistance programmes and peacebuilding operations.

Fourth, UN efforts to promote economic, social and cultural rights still lag far behind its efforts in the field of civil and political rights. This Conference should insist on an end to this neglect and call for measures to strengthen implementation of economic, social and cultural rights including the elaboration of an optional protocol to the Covenant.

The failure to take these rights seriously has had a particularly devastating consequences for women who suffer the most under poverty and the effects of structural adjustment programmes.

Fifth, women's human rights also suffer from the failure to develop effective means for implementation of existing guarantees. CEDAW must be given greater financial and human resources, and the far-reaching reservations to the Women's Convention, which are incompatible with its object and purpose, must be withdrawn. An optional protocol containing an individual and interstate complaints procedure under the Convention should be prepared by the Commission on the Status of Women.

Finally, the time has come for the UN to establish a judicial mechanism to punish those guilty of crimes against humanity, war crimes and gross violations of human rights. We, therefore, strongly support the creation of a permanent UN criminal court.

To move forward in all these areas the UN needs money. Mr. Chairperson, the NGOs of the WEO group would like to, therefore, conclude with the plea that the regular budget of the UN human rights programme be increased to reflect the enormity of the task before it.

Thank you.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the speaker for his statement. The floor is open to the next speaker.

MCCHESENEY, Allan (NGO statement from the Western European and Other Regions on the questions of access to United Nations human rights mechanisms and the rights of human rights defenders, Network on International Human Rights):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS - HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT - COOPERATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS - UN

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

Secretary-General Fall spoke last week of the need for an equal partnership with NGOs in the promotion of human rights. The draft final document of the World Conference also recognizes the important role of NGOs.

Yet, non-governmental organizations and individual human rights defenders do not yet have adequate access to United Nations human rights supervisory mechanisms, nor do they have adequate respect and protection from governments when they carry out their essential activities in the areas of standard-setting, education and monitoring. In general, the governments of the Western and Other Group do not stand in the way of NGO activities, even when there are differing points of view, which may make some governments uncomfortable from time to time. Indeed, we NGOs are often encouraged to dialogue and work cooperatively with these governments in the fields of international human rights and in national implementation of human rights standards.

My name is Alan McChesney. I am a member of the Executive of a Canadian Network on International Human Rights and in some capacities also represent the International Commission of Jurists in some meetings. But here I am representing the Western and Other Group on the questions of access to United Nations human rights mechanisms and the rights of human rights defenders.

We have chosen to seize this opportunity to place before the World Conference two statements agreed to by all NGOs participating in this process on these two issues of deep concern to NGOs globally. These two resolutions were drafted and adopted by representatives of NGOs from all parts of the globe represented in this room and from all kinds of groups, both vulnerable and more advantaged. These two statements were adopted yesterday by a plenary of all NGOs. They have been transmitted to the President of the World Conference, to the Rapporteur-General and to the Secretary-General. There is a request by the NGO Liaison Committee that they be circulated as official documents and attached to the final document of the World Conference. As I say, they are from all NGOs so they, indeed, have some special status, we hope.

Allow me, Mr. President, to refer to only a few of the principles proclaimed in these statements.

The first statement is titled NGO Access to United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms. The opening paragraph, you will be pleased to know, distinguished delegates, is in square brackets. That is because it quotes from what may become part of the final document of this Conference or may not do so. The phrase welcomes the recognition by the World Conference of the important role of NGOs in the promotion of human rights and humanitarian activities.

Now, in the body of the NGO access statement here are some of the clauses:

- We call for an enhanced role for NGOs in the United Nations, especially in the area of human rights,
- NGOs should be thoroughly involved in the reporting processes established within human rights treaty monitoring systems. As a minimum, this should include prior notification by the reporting States of the contents of their periodic reports,
- The possibility for NGOs to submit information directly to Treaty Bodies. We think the Treaty Bodies should emulate the inclusive approach recently shown to NGOs by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
- In order to further their understanding by the general public, United Nations human rights reports should be written in plainer language and/or accompanied by a clear summary, and
- In order to foster the partnership of which Mr. Fall spoke, it is hoped that the United Nations Centre could work cooperatively with NGOs to distribute information on pending deliberations and on reports of monitoring bodies.

We hope that a working group will be set up to try to implement some of these suggestions.

Now, from the statement on Human Rights Defenders, there is a quotation from Article 3 of the United Nations draft declaration on human rights defenders agreed to in first reading this January. It states that everyone has the right individually and in association with others to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels.

This statement on human rights defenders elaborates some of the ways that human rights defenders' work can be assisted and, if necessary, protected. There are some ideas, which are not yet in these principles, perhaps the distinguished delegates here will themselves hope to insert these additional ideas into a final document. One example is the possibility and the value of NGOs participating in the work of the United Nations programme of advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights. This programme can benefit from NGO expertise in planning, needs assessment and implementation and training.

And I thank you for this opportunity to place these documents before the assembly and trust that they will be taken on board by the delegates and in the final document of the World Conference.

Thank you, Mr. President.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the speaker for his statement. The floor is open to the next speaker.

BATALLAS, Carlos (Movimiento por la paz, el desarme y la libertad), spoke in Spanish, English text revised according to the actual delivery:

Keywords: IMPUNITY - HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS - INTERNATIONAL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

Thank you, Mr. President,

I am Carlos Batallas, representative of *Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad* from Spain, which is part of the Spanish platform of human rights NGOs.

In our view, and in the view of the rest of the NGOs who are members of the Western Group, one of the greatest threats present to the credibility of the whole system for the protection of human rights is a that of impunity. Impunity of those responsible for the violation of human rights such as forced disappearances, torture, and summary and arbitrary executions constitutes in itself a serious lack of protection for victims and a denial of the right of victims to justice. International legal limits must be established on the discretionary exercise by states of their punitive power particularly their obligation to exclude from amnesty laws those responsible for violations of human rights.

The United Nations should adopt measures within an agreed plan to prevent and eradicate impunity. Among those measures could be the creation of a permanent international institution on impunity with a thematic rapporteur or a working group, and the strengthening through formal instruments of the principle of universal jurisdiction for the repression of grave and systematic violations of human rights.

We believe that one of the most effective international instruments in this specific fields, even if it has wider implications for the whole of the UN system, would be a permanent international criminal court with the competence to judge persons guilty of crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against human kind and violations of human rights. All states should have the possibility to arrest and bring before this international criminal court individuals or to denounce those responsible for states that do

not respect human rights. This court should also periodically publish a list of those responsible so that no state could claim ignorance as an excuse for shielding violators of human rights.

This Conference must provide mankind with a permanent guarantee that protects and defends individuals against arbitrariness and that, in turn, punishes those who, under cover of their power structures, believe that they can act in accordance with their particular interests and for their benefit and not in accordance with the interests and benefits of the individuals.

This concludes the joint presentation of NGOs from the Western group and others. On behalf of NGOs from Spain and the Western group, I thank you.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the speaker for that statement. We will now hear joint NGO statements from people of color in the Western European and Other Regions. You have the floor.

WAREHAM, Roger (NGO statement from the People of Color in the Western European and Other Regions, December 12 Movement):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION - NORTH AMERICA - WESTERN EUROPE - SOUTH AFRICA

Thank you, Mr. President.

Distinguished delegates of Member States, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations,

My name is Roger Wareham and I am a member of December 12 Movement. I make this statement on behalf of people of color in North America and Western Europe.

We speak to this Conference today, seriously concerned that whatever progress has been made over the past forty-five years has not affected the situation of people of color located in North America and Western Europe. For us to move forward we need to examine the reality, focus on the obstacles and determine how to overcome them.

In the short time we have, we would like to touch on several points - racism, development, self-determination, double standards - which we think exemplify the problems in the field of human rights.

The United Nations, in its instruments and pronouncements, has made it clear that, in theory, it opposes racism and racial discrimination.

But for those of us of color - black, brown, red, yellow - of African descent, Latinos, Indigenous, Asian, these declarations have meant little. The wealth of this region, this very hall in which we stand, was built on our backs and blood. And, yet, not only have we not collectively benefitted from it but we continue to remain victims of the policies of those who have.

Our conditions of life, whose parameters are set by the very racism, which our governments condemn when seen outside their own national boundaries, bespeak almost two different countries. In health care, education, employment, infant mortality, criminal justice, housing, etc. we face a double standard that relegates us to a status of less than human. Geographically located in the so-called developed world, our reality is that of the developing world. We are collectivities of underdevelopment, the South in the North, peoples whose right to development is constantly violated.

Although we may carry passports of a particular nation state, in reality, our nationality is defined by our skin color. To the governments of the countries in which we reside and to too many of its white citizenry, the idea of a Black European or an Asian Canadian is an oxymoron. Latinos born in certain

countries of North America are still treated as foreigners and illegal aliens, while those forty million people of African descent in the United States must have civil rights bills passed every year to assure the alleged rights of citizenship bestowed upon them more than a century ago. They are then told to be grateful for having the right to vote while, solely due to their race, they lack jobs, places to live, a decent education and adequate health care. According to *The UN Quality of Life Index of 173 Countries*, the quality of life for Blacks in the richest nation of the world is equivalent to that of Trinidad and Tobago. The violation of their right to development makes the notion of democracy and citizenship for all a cruel joke.

The fraudulent nature of their citizenship is further demonstrated in the arbitrary treatment accorded them by law enforcement personnel. The torture, beating of a Black man that was seen on international TV in 1991 occurs on a daily basis in Black and Latino communities across that country. Its complement is found in the racist attacks conducted by white mobs in the countries of North America and Western Europe whose governments, either through the passage of reactionary legislation restricting immigration or through a lack of decisive action both officially and unofficially condone such activity.

One of the most serious obstacles to further progress lies in the double standard that exists in this body in respect to application and enforcement of standards. It is this selective enforcement that permits near-universal condemnation of the apartheid system in South Africa and greets with silence the policy of a country in North America, which incarcerates its Black male citizens at four times the rate that South Africa does. It is this selective enforcement that turns a blind eye to the North while aiming high-technology, laser-guided weapons on Southern countries whose rulers have incurred the disfavor of certain big Northern players. But even in the Southern exposure there is a double standard within the double standard. The military option is never exercised against white people, the North within the South, once again - South Africa.

The double standard is seen in the failure to condemn the policies of a big power, which can implement a three-decade long bilateral blockade of a tiny southern neighbor, one designed to violate the latter's right to self-determination and which causes criminal hardship to and violates the human rights of that country's people. The converse effect of such blockade violates the human rights of the Black residents of the aggressor country by denying them the benefits of medical advances, for example, in the field of sickle cell anemia that the blockaded country is prepared to offer. Yet, this body says nothing until that same power threatens to extend such blockade in a manner that will infringe on their country's right to freedom of commerce.

The double standard is seen when certain models of democracy, which took the former socialist countries to task for holding political prisoners, avoid the opprobrium of doing the same thing by calling their Black, Brown, Red, Yellow and White political prisoner and prisoners of war criminals, and this body says nothing.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the instruments that exist work ineffectively because the moral credibility that underlies them is on questionable ground. That situation can only be corrected not through the creation of new mechanisms such as a High Commissioner but through the decision to make all countries regardless of size, military might or wealth accountable to one standard of application and enforcement. While we have made several recommendations in this area, which are incorporated in the Final Report of the NGO Forum to the World Conference, we would like to end with a recommendation of a particularly important concrete step that this body can take. We live in areas, which have the reputation for being the moral standard bearers of human rights and, thus, escape serious scrutiny. This error can be corrected, and a giant step taken towards restoring the moral credibility of the human rights bodies by ensuring that the newly appointed Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related violence initiate his mandate in this region beginning with the US and then to Germany, Great Britain, France, Canada, et al.

Thank you.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the speaker for his statement. The floor is open to the next speaker.

OGUENDO, Angel (NGO statement from the People of Color in the Western European and Other Regions ; Offensive 92), spoke in Spanish; text is edited based on the English interpretation:

Keywords: DISCRIMINATION - LATIN AMERICANS - SELF-DETERMINATION - COLONIAL COUNTRIES - POLITICAL PRISONERS

Mr. President, delegates, members of NGOs,

My name is Angel Oguendo, of Offensive 92, and I am speaking on behalf of the Puerto Ricans, who together with many other Latino Americans are officially catalogued belonging to the first world, though in fact we live in the third world conditions. The struggle of the Latino Americans against the systematic violation of our human rights unites us with our comrades from other oppressed peoples in the first world in North America. We also face unequal treatment in the fields of health, education, nutrition, criminal law, housing, economic opportunities, political power, social acceptance, and so forth. As regards other violations or infringements of human rights, our situation is different to those of our Afro-American and indigenous comrades. For example, the Latinos are most particularly deprived of the right to express their culture and use their language. There are differences even within the Latino communities. On the one hand, some Latinos are particularly denied the right to free movement and to a just treatment from the immigration authorities. On the other hand, what is peculiar to my people, and this is what I am going to concentrate on in my presentation, is the way in which we are prevented from exercising the right to self-determination independence as well as the right to anti-colonial resistance. With regards to these rights there is, once again, a terrible inconsistency: they are fiercely proclaimed abroad while they are thoroughly repressed domestically. Thus, the progress represented by acknowledging these rights internationally has been overshadowed by the lack of full implementation. Consequently, we call for justice to be done as regards these rights and specifically that an amnesty to be declared for people jailed for their struggle against one of the last colonial systems in the Americas.

Colonialism has universally been repudiated in international fora, the right to self-determination is expressed in both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Since 1960, the UN General Assembly has repeatedly declared colonialism to be the violation of human rights, contrary to the UN Charter and a threat to world peace. The same Assembly has recognized, and I cite:

the legitimacy of the struggle by the peoples under colonial rule to exercise their right to self-determination and independence.¹

It has also stated that the repression against anti-colonial movements violates not only the Charter and the Declaration on Decolonization but also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

No one can deny that we are a colony. After the initial military invasion and occupation, anti-democratic domination of the military, judicial legislative and executive persists on the part of the metropolis. The persecution and repression of the anti-colonial movement continues as it has been recognized by the colonial judiciary and legislature. The Decolonization Committee has recognized our colonial repression and has explicitly condemned anti-colonial repression. Even the present colonial government has repudiated the present situation because of its colonial character. A majority of our combatants have also expressed their views against this situation

¹ UN General Assembly resolution 2105 (XX) adopted 20 December 1965.

The international law not only condemns this colonial situation but supports resistance. That is why we demand that the process of decolonization be instituted, and that an amnesty must be declared for those people who have been imprisoned for their anti-colonial struggle. Disproportionate sentences have been passed on these comrades and they are subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment. Their release would undoubtedly be the best possible gesture on behalf of human rights. In passing, we would like to recall that there is a specific precedent for our claim. As part of the policy praised here for having human rights placed on the international agenda, an amnesty was granted to nationalist prisoners.

Our cause has been supported by numerous groups and individuals. Our call has found an echo in the hearts of hundreds of people in this Conference who have signed our petition. We hope that specific actions will go hand in hand with the new spirit of self-criticism and the recognition that no nation is perfect in matters of human rights.

The following has been said in this forum repeatedly since the adoption of the Universal Declaration activism on behalf of human rights has opened the locks of prison cells and has created spaces where individuals living under repression can enjoy their freedom. We are that activism incarnate. We have come here so that our cause together with other brave causes here represented may become part of the international campaign on behalf of human rights.

Thank you.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President), spoke in Spanish and English:

I would like to thank the speaker for that statement.

The Conference will now hear joint NGO statements from African region. You have the floor.

Joint NGO speakers from African region? No?

In the absence of the speakers of joint NGO from African region, I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of *Fédération des femmes arabes et Union des femmes tunisiennes*. Before I give the floor, I would like to remind you that each speaker is assigned five minutes at maximum. Thank you. The representative, you have the floor.

KEFI, Faiza (General Arab Women Federation and Union nationale de la femme tunisienne), spoke in Arabic:

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - WOMEN - ARAB COUNTRIES - GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION - EDUCATION - CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS - WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICTS

Mr. Chairman,

I have the pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the Arab Women Federation. This is an organization that was set up in 1945. This is the Federation of most of the Arab Women's Associations in the Arab region and of the world. We are very proud to be participating in this Conference as an organization with consultative status with ECOSOC.

Mr. Chairman,

We feel that this Conference should reflect the ideals of justice and equality, ideals, which the humanity has constantly struggled for. We would like to express our satisfaction with respect to all of the positive measures seeking to consolidate women's status through national instruments, which are intended to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women because women are, indeed, an

integral part of humankind and of human rights, in general. Of course, there is very often many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, when it comes to human rights. Women in this part of the world very often suffer from grave violations of human rights in contravention to all international instruments that focus on elimination of all types of discrimination against women, especially at this end of the century when we are witnessing the blowing of the wind of democracy that is carrying its way through all of the countries of the world. This creation of democracy very often requires supplementary, additional efforts on the part of women.

Our Federation has done various studies on women's status in our region. The upshot of these studies has been that the Arab women do not sufficiently participate in the development of their societies for various reasons and various obstacles. Our Federation has tried to analyze these problems that beset our women and has concluded the following: the illiteracy rate amongst our women, especially in the rural areas, is much higher than amongst men in spite of the efforts made in education. The discrimination in education, lack of access to various types of training, does, thus, constitute a very major obstacle to the development of women and the advancement thereof. The third problem is the problem that women encounter because of the economic crisis besetting the world. We note that women are more vulnerable to underemployment, unemployment, poverty and exploitation.

In spite of the progress registered in various Arab countries regarding the women's rights, our Federation would like to draw your attention to the fact that there are two types of obstacles in that regard presently. The first of these are the customs and religious practices, which consider women as an inferior being. These obstacles, we feel, have been reinforced because of the demonstration of extremist attitudes of all types. The second category of obstacles is one that is imposed on Arab countries, men, women and children. We all know what the peoples in the occupied Arab territories are suffering from, women included. The persecution, the oppression is going on in this area. We are familiar with the Iraqi women's sufferings because of the economic blockade imposed. The Arab woman is very all too often subjected to the dismembering of her family because she has lost her husband, she has lost her sons during the Gulf crisis.

The Federation went through difficulties because Baghdad was our headquarters and today we dare expressing a hope during this meeting that our Federation will be able to survive, that we will be able to address the challenges of our times. We would like to call upon the Arab States to take all the necessary measures to ensure that Arab women will be guaranteed the full enjoyment of all their rights.

Thank you.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the representative for her statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Disabled Peoples' International. You have the floor.

SARA-SERANO, Maria Christina (Disabled Peoples' International):

Keywords: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - WOMEN - GIRLS - UN

My name is Maria Christina Sara-Serano, and I represent Disabled Peoples' International.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to have the opportunity to make this intervention. I am speaking on behalf of Disabled Peoples' International, an international non-governmental organization with member assemblies in some 110 countries. Within Disabled Peoples' International, there is a strong empowerment movement of women with disabilities, who fight for their rights within the organization

and in the society at large. In this intervention, I would like to help you focus your thoughts on the liberation, empowerment struggle in society of disabled women.

Three years ago, there was a seminar here in Vienna about disabled women arranged by the United Nations Women's Division and the Disabled Persons Unit of the Centre for Social Development, in cooperation with the Women's Committee of Disabled Peoples' International. The Seminar produced some 90 recommendations all of them of priority concern for disabled girls and women. The report is available from the United Nations.

In the preamble section of the report it is stated,

- Prevailing attitudes of society towards the human, economic and social value of disabled women are misinformed and unjustifiably negative.
- Women with disabilities have, up to now, been pushed aside and have not been openly accepted in the women's movement,
- Every woman is likely to experience disability at some point of her life, either by having a disability herself or as a wife, mother or daughter of another disabled person.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ten to fifteen percent of every country's population are disabled persons. Many of them encounter a double, often multiple, discrimination of their rights. There are more than 500 million disabled persons in the world. This means that there are more than 250 million disabled girls and women in the world. Many of them are poor, uneducated, hidden away and not given the possibilities to live according to their abilities.

Among the recommendations from the 1990 Seminar, it is stated that disabled women should be informed about their civil and human rights in order to be able to make their own decisions. It is stated that appropriate legislation that guarantees the full exercise of the rights of women to decide on sexuality, pregnancy, new reproductive technology, adoption, motherhood and any other relevant issue in this respect should be adopted and implemented, and that no medical decisions concerning a disabled woman should be made without her informed consent.

Measures should be adopted to protect women with mental or learning disabilities, and information should be provided in a manner they can easily understand. When appropriate, an advocate should be provided to facilitate their decision-making.

Disabled girls and women should have full access to and the right to primary, secondary and higher education, and they should be encouraged to take up that right. UNESCO should give them priority attention. Employment is a critical component in enabling disabled women to achieve self-esteem and social recognition. Effective vocational training and employment opportunities need to be provided for them. There should be no discrimination against them regarding the availability of health care services.

However, within Disabled Peoples' International and other organizations of disabled persons, we are looking forward to the future documentation that will be submitted to the CEDAW as well as to the Committee covering the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Many of us are of the opinion that many discriminatory procedures and violations of the rights of disabled girls and women exist because the decision-makers are not aware of the situation.

The standard rules for the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities offer the world's five million disabled people some hope that their rights, may be, one day will be recognized. Disabled Peoples' International strongly urges all United Nations Member States to adopt the standard rules

and, thereby, include the global disability community in the enjoyment of human rights principles as independent living, self-determination, full participation and equalization of opportunities.

We are also looking forward to an effective implementation of the new human rights instruments emerging from the ECOSOC and United Nations General Assembly later this year.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are convinced that you will adopt a strong statement from this Conference, which includes strong reference to the possibilities to improve the human rights of disabled girls, women and men.

Thank you very much.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the representative for her statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People. You have the floor. International Federation of Hard of Hearing People? In the absence of the speaker from International Federation of Hard of Hearing People I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the International Council of Jewish Women, International Alliance of Women, the International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and International European Association of Democratic Lawyers. You have the floor.

SEIGEL, Leila (International Council of Jewish Women and International Alliance of Women and International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty and International Association of Democratic Lawyers and European Association of Democratic Lawyers), spoke in French:

Keywords: ANTI-SEMITISM - INTERNATIONAL LAW

Thank you, Mr. President.

Within the agenda item dealing with contemporary trends and the new challenges in the full implementation of all human rights and on behalf of my organization, the International Council for Jewish Women, I will not be repeating the organizations that you have just cited but this statement is also on behalf of the International League for the Rights and the Freedom of Peoples, International Movement ATD Fourth World, the World Federation of Methodist Women, World Federation for Mental Health, International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples, Women's International Zionist Organization.

[Spoke in English]

My name is Leila Seigel.

[Spoke in French]

We would like to draw the attention of this assembly to the very surprising fact that one of the most virulent and the most recurrent forms of racism, namely anti-Semitism, remains one of the most flagrantly ignored in all the instruments and in all of the UN fora dealing with human rights, especially the Commission on Human Rights as well as its Sub-commission.

The international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1966 itself does not mention the word anti-Semitism, not even once. And yet, in the statement of the Pontifical Commission called Justice and Peace of the 3rd of November 1988, entitled *The Church and Racism*

Towards a More Brotherly Society, anti-Semitism is defined as, I cite, “the most tragic form of racist ideology ever made manifest in our century.”

Unfortunately, today it is notorious that in almost all of the Eastern and Western European countries as well as in many other countries, even some which have no Jewish population, there is a very disquieting resurgence of anti-Semitism. This is not just manifested in the desecration of cemeteries but also in the infamous work of historical revisions or falsifications, which deny the reality of the Holocaust in order to kill for the second time those dead in Auschwitz and Treblinka.

One does not know how far can go this millennium-old hatred in all its manifestations, which runs on unexhausted. What extreme should it reach before the term anti-Semitism finally appears in UN texts, so that we can act and we stop turn away our eyes as we did in the past with the consequences that we have no right to forget. Never again it was said and yet.

The above-mentioned organizations would like to call upon the assembly so that it explicitly introduces "anti-Semitism" in the enumeration of all the ancient and contemporary forms of racism in all the relevant UN texts in order to enable analysis and to give all of the governments the means to fight it. We note with the satisfaction that ever so many governments have talked along these lines.

I thank you, Mr. President.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the representative for her statement. The floor is open to the next speaker. I now give the floor to the representative of the Committee on Non-governmental Organizations (New York). You have the floor.

SCHOENBERG, Harris O. (Committee on Non-governmental Organizations (New York), Binai Birth International; Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations):

Keywords: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS - UN High Commissioner for Human Rights - NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Harris O. Schoenberg, and I have the honor to represent the delegations of the B'nai B'rith International and the Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations, and to serve as Chairman of the United Nations NGO Committee on Human Rights.

The playwright George Bernard Shaw once wrote, “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

In the UN human rights world, the so-called unreasonable people tend to be representatives of what you call “non-governmental organizations or NGOs” for whom afflicting the uncomfortable is as important a duty as comforting the afflicted.

I put the word NGOs in quotes because what a terribly negative and dehumanizing name you have chosen for us – non-governmental organizations. Imagine if we called women, non-men. Why not call us what we really are, people's organizations. After all, the UN Charter talk not about “we, the states” or “we, the governments.” It talks about we, the peoples. Although most of us were kept in the basement the first day, and we are now in a step backward from the Nairobi Conference of 1985 not permitted to address you from the rostrum, it is fitting and appropriate that we, the peoples, were invited to this World Conference to advance the cause of human rights because we help you to set and

fulfill your human rights commitments. We took on this responsibility from the beginning, the Dumbarton Oaks proposals for the world body made virtually no mention of human rights.

Emerging from the Holocaust experience organizations such as my own went to San Francisco in 1945 to urge that the UN promote and protect human rights. As a result, a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms was written into the Charter five different times. We then acquired consultative status and contributed to the drafting of the major human rights instruments.

In 1959, a global swastika epidemic moved the same organizations to urge the UN to combat racial discrimination and religious intolerance. When the drafting process was largely completed, we turned our attention to ratification, education and effective implementation.

Over the last two years our Human Rights Committee has organized seminars on new impressing human rights issues, for example, genocide, women's and children's rights, human rights in the environment, human rights and democracy, and human rights and peace, and sponsored two satellite conferences, which presented proposals to this Conference.

To those delegates, which supported the establishment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights who would be a giant in the field like a René Cassin or an Andrei Sakharov and, thus, possess the stature as well as the authority, the resources and the location at UN Headquarters to champion human rights globally, we say thank you. And I emphasize New York because it is only there that such a person could integrate fully human rights concerns and activities into the UN's work in peacekeeping, peace enforcement and all aspects of conflict resolution.

To those delegates, which supported immediate and decisive action to stop genocide, we say thank you.

To those delegations, which stressed the universality of human rights, we say thank you. We also bid welcome to the large number of national organizations, particularly from the Third World, whose participation here is a sobering reminder that human rights are claimed by all humans.

To those delegations, which realize that a commitment to life of liberty and the pursuit of happiness implies the indivisibility of human rights, we say thank you.

To those delegations, which understood that governments derived their just authority from the consent of the governed and that, therefore, self-determination is an ongoing right for all peoples who recognize it for all others, we say thank you.

To those delegations, which stress that free political institutions, accountable to their peoples, assure a more just, peaceful and environmentally sound world, we say thank you.

To those delegations, which stress that the connection between democracy, development and human rights is that democracy in the generic sense helps to assure the other two, we say thank you.

To the large number of delegations, which call for a much higher priority for combating all forms of bigotry or xenophobia, including specifically anti-Semitism and prejudice against the adherence of any other religion or ethical system or belief, we say thank you. As the actor Richard [inaudible] has declared at the UN Headquarters on Human Rights Day in 1991, anti-Semitism is an evil and everyone knows it, who is not an anti-Semite. And we still hope that this Conference will act on this issue.

To those delegations, which spoke up for the rights of women and children, we say thank you.

To those delegations, which spoke out against international terrorism, we say thank you.

To those delegations, which call for the universal adoption of the human rights covenants, we say thank you.

To those delegations, which supported the International Criminal Court, we say thank you.

And to those delegations, which supported the integration of consultative status organizations in a more structured way into the UN's human rights work, we say thank you.

But the truth, Mr. Chairman, is that to assure harmony in this Conference many of these proposals will not be adopted.

May I respectfully suggest to the distinguished delegates that before you go home, you take a few hours to understand the urgency we feel sitting on a site where only fifty years ago Jewish slave laborers were worked to death, and where today only a few hundred miles away a similar tragedy unfolds.

May I propose that you do as representatives of our people's organizations did on Monday with the kind assistance of the Austrian government and take a bus in the direction of Linz, where Hitler wanted to retire and visit the Malthausen concentration camp. The camp of no return. Venture if you can inside the gas chambers and witness with your own eyes the crematoria and the sight where the Nazi SS enjoyed forcing the inmates to kill each other and then express your solidarity with the victims of genocide and Holocaust denial. We will be around when you get back, and we will meet again, if not at this Conference but at another, for we respectfully serve notice that we will not give up this cause of human rights, not now, not here, not anywhere, not ever.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MATSUNAGA, Nobuo (President):

I thank the representative for his statement. This was the last speaker for this morning.

[Change of President]

ALOIS, Mock (President):

I understand that the representative of Pakistan wants to raise the point of order. Please take the floor.

KAMAL, Ahmad (Pakistan, Organization of Islamic Conference), spoke on point of order:

Keywords: BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA - DECLARATIONS

Mr. Chairman,

Under Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Conference on Human Rights, I move that we temporarily adjourn the current debate under item 9 and begin consideration of the draft special declaration on Bosnia and Herzegovina contained in document A/CONF.157/L.2 and to resume our current discussion on item 9 after the completion of the consideration of that document. I make this proposal because of the gravity and urgency of the Bosnia and Herzegovina situation. To make a statement introducing document A/CONF.157/L.2, do I have your permission, Mr. President?

ALOIS, Mock (President):

Permission.

KAMAL, Ahmad:

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives,

On behalf of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference I have the honor to introduce the draft special declaration on Bosnia and Herzegovina contained in document A/CONF.157/L.2.

During the course of the general debate, the large number of the Conference participants have expressed their serious concern at the grave human tragedy that is continuing to unfold in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country barely 200 kilometres from Vienna.

The World Conference has launched an appeal two days ago to the Security Council to take the necessary measures to stop the genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To our infinite regret, this appeal has, as yet, evoked no response. Meanwhile, the genocide continues.

A state, member of the United Nations, is being subjected to aggression. An entire people has been progressively exterminated through deliberate genocide. One and a half million men, women and children being uprooted and half-a-million driven into besieged enclaves. The flower of the Bosnian youth has been killed. The towns and cities of that country are reduced to rubble. Fifty thousand Bosnian girls and women have been subject to systematic rape as an instrument of war strategy. And thousands of children traumatized by harrowing experience from which they may never recover.

The horrendous magnitude of the tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina is and will remain a blot on the face of the civilization that professes pride in its commitment to human rights.

In the face of untold horrors and likely extinction, the entire Bosnian people have been driven to despair. They have no choice but to defend themselves or die.

Our response, the response of the World Conference to the only recognized case of genocide since the Second World War must be proportioned to the crime. It must be categorical, effective and immediate. The absence of forthright action by international community will only expose ineffectiveness and weakness of the different organs of the United Nations as well as that of several governments before this most brutal and flagrant violation of human rights.

It is inconceivable that this World Conference should end without clearly pronouncing its position on the tragic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our Conference should issue a strong and clear message of support and sympathy for the brutalized people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and give its clear guidance on immediate and resolute action that needs to be taken.

It is because of this realization and a commitment to the defense of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention that the Organization of the Islamic Conference has tabled the draft special declaration, which I am now introducing.

Plans has also been put forward by the aggressor to partition the State Member of the United Nations. This is tantamount to rewarding aggression, and this is total violation of the basic principle of the territorial integrity of states. This aggressor partition plan envisages the ghettoization of nearly half of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina into a less than a tenth of its territory. That is why we are introducing a short amendment to the operative part of the special draft declaration to read as follows:

The World Conference categorically rejects the aggressor plan to partition the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A key provision of the special declaration is the call for exempting the government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the arms embargo imposed on the former Yugoslavia, which in actual fact is operating only against Bosnia and Herzegovina. A people subjected to genocide also being subjected to the arms embargo. The denial of the inherent right to self-defense to the non-Serb Muslim

people of Bosnia and Herzegovina has led to the slaughter of the Bosnian Muslims. In the process, their most fundamental right, the right to life itself, is being extinguished.

It is the hope of the co-sponsors, and there are many of them, and the list will be circulated shortly; it is the hope of the co-sponsors of this draft special declaration that it will be carried by consensus and that the membership of the World Conference will demonstrate the same solidarity that it did during the course of its earlier appeal.

I thank you, Mr. President.

ALOIS, Mock (President):

Thank you very much. I share the view expressed by the distinguished representative of Pakistan that we should try everything to maintain the consensus principle, what we did, Secretary-General Fall and me during these morning hours.

I was now asked by the representative of Kenya to introduce number L.3. He has the floor.

MANJIRA, Daniel (Kenya, African Group), spoke on point of order:

Keywords: ANGOLA - DECLARATIONS - CEASEFIRES - HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor.

Mr. President,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce on behalf of the African Group a draft special declaration on Angola, which is contained in document A/CONF.157/L.3.

In the declaration, the Conference would, among other things, express alarm both at the continuing and unnecessary loss of innocent lives resulting from the resumption of war and at the deliberate targeting of the civilian population, economic and social structures in total disregard for internationally recognized human rights standards and norms; to urge the international community and in particular the Security Council of the United Nations to take forceful concrete and decisive measures to immediately implement its relevant resolutions on Angola and effective ceasefire there and restore peace and security in the Republic of Angola; to apply maximum pressure on UNITA to accept the results of the democratic elections of 1992 and abide fully by the peace accords; to extend immediate humanitarian assistance to the millions of refugees and internally displaced persons in Angola; and to prevent the continued violations of human rights arising from the resumption of the war by intensifying joint international efforts for the reconstruction of all the national institutions of the Republic of Angola.

Mr. President,

The African Group attaches considerable importance to the message carried in this declaration, and we hope that the World Conference on Human Rights will adopt the declaration by consensus.

Mr. President,

We hope that the discussion on the two documents that have been introduced will not divert the attention of this Conference from the main issues that are before us for resolution, and I hope, Mr. Chairman, that we will not labor this question very much.

Thank you very much.

ALOIS, Mock (President):

I thank the distinguished representative of Kenya. The meeting is interrupted and adjourned until 3 o'clock.