



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

Distr.
GENERAL

CERD/C/SR.1480
21 May 2003

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Fifty-ninth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1480th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 8 August 2001, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. SHERIFIS

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 5) (continued)

Sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth periodic reports of Viet Nam (CERD/C/357/Add.2)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the delegation of Viet Nam took places at the Committee table.

2. Mr. NGUYEN QUY BINH (Viet Nam) said that the Government of Viet Nam had endeavoured to prepare its sixth to ninth periodic reports in line with the Committee's guidelines and recommendations and to report in detail on its application of the Convention.

3. More than 30 years of war had taken their toll on Viet Nam, in addition to which the country had undergone an economic crisis in the early 1980s. With the failure of the centrally planned economic system, in 1986 the Government had embarked upon a reform process which had accelerated since 1989 so as to shift to a commodity-based multi-sector market economy regulated by an indicative government planning system and by legislation. Compulsory targets and price controls had been abolished, the private sector developed, and State, agricultural and household enterprises given autonomy. Backed by new legislation, the reform process had been extended to cover the financial and banking sectors. Social life had been democratized through a more precise definition of the people's basic rights and obligations, including the right to engage in free enterprise, the right of lawful ownership, freedom of movement and residence and the right to travel overseas and to return. The reforms had brought tangible benefits to society in all aspects of economic, social and political life and in the areas of justice and administration.

4. Since 1993, the date of the previous report, Viet Nam had pursued that reform process, with its open-door policies, enabling it substantially to improve food production, growth and living standards. With a view to achieving sustainable development, the Government had set up a social welfare system, together with a large number of socio-economic development programmes and poverty eradication campaigns targeted on certain disadvantaged groups (such as minorities, inhabitants of war-torn regions and those affected by natural disasters, disabled people and war-invalids, orphans and street children, and women), so as to alleviate the economic disparities that were the main cause of racial discrimination.

5. Furthermore, Viet Nam had become a State more fully governed by the rule of law, with the promulgation since 1987 of a number of legal instruments of all kinds. Achievements in economic and social reforms over the past few years had enabled Viet Nam to become integrated in the community of nations and to consolidate the rights and equality of all its citizens. While racial discrimination was not really a problem in Viet Nam, the Government had been paying due attention to that issue so as to promote sustainable development and national unity and cohesion.

6. Viet Nam had more than 50 ethnic minority groups, totaling 9.6 million people and representing more than 13 per cent of the country's population. Those communities mostly lived in the mountainous areas that comprised two thirds of the territory. Ethnic groups had a long-standing tradition of peaceful coexistence, free from hatred and racial antagonism. During the Vietnamese people's struggle for independence, the overriding need for national unity had had a profound effect on attitudes. The sense of a common origin was clearly reflected in all aspects of Vietnamese culture, and even in everyday language, in which words such as "minorities" and "race" were seldom used, being replaced by expressions such as "townsfolk" and "mountainfolk" and "sister nationalities".

7. Article 5 of the 1992 Constitution, which defined Viet Nam's policy on nationalities, stressed equality, solidarity and mutual assistance and prohibited all acts of ethnic discrimination and division. It protected linguistic and cultural diversity and laid the foundations for a policy of comprehensive development with a view to promoting the interests of all ethnic minorities.

8. Protection of the fundamental rights of ethnic groups was guaranteed by various legal instruments, foremost among them the Constitution and other basic laws. In addition to those laws there was also a large body of regulations and policy guidelines aimed at ensuring implementation and promotion of the rights of ethnic groups in all areas of social life. Ethnic communities were well represented in the country's institutions. They occupied important positions in the administration and the National Assembly; in the mountainous regions their delegates accounted for about half the members of the People's Councils. They occupied a large number of civil service posts and received preferential treatment in matters of recruitment, training and promotion.
9. With regard to socio-economic development, the Government had always striven to reduce the disparities in social and economic development between the mountainous regions and the lowland provinces by promoting the interests of ethnic groups while enabling them to preserve their identity and fully to exploit their own resources. Specifically, it had adopted a blueprint for the development of the mountainous regions, involving a dozen sectoral development and poverty eradication programmes. In 1998 it had launched two major socio-economic development programmes for ethnic areas, one of them comprising 1,753 projects in 30 provinces, the other consisting of poverty reduction measures, aimed at providing 40 ethnic groups in 41 provinces with financial support to enhance their agricultural production capacity. The targets for the year 2000 had been provision of credit, expansion of radio and television coverage, upgrading the communications network and the eradication of endemic diseases. In addition, essential consumer goods had been distributed free of charge to ethnic communities in particularly difficult circumstances or disadvantaged regions.
10. With regard to cultural matters, the Government accorded special attention to preserving the ethnic cultural heritage through education programmes and broadcasting networks in the major ethnic languages, and through promotion of cultural exchanges among ethnic communities, thereby acknowledging the richness and variety of the national culture.
11. In concluding, he reaffirmed his Government's commitment to respect for human rights and democratic principles and its rejection of all forms of racial discrimination.
12. Ms. JANUARY-BARDILL (Country Rapporteur) welcomed the fact that Viet Nam had resumed its obligation to submit periodic reports to the Committee in line with article 9 of the Convention. During consideration of the previous report, the Committee had noted the willingness of the Government of Viet Nam to establish dialogue with the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and had expressed the hope that Viet Nam would make the declaration referred to in article 14 of the Convention. She was pleased to note that the content of the report had improved and that some of the suggestions made to the delegation had been acted on. She congratulated the Government on its achievements in the reform process, and expressed regret that natural disasters and the Asian financial crisis had adversely affected that strategy.
13. The report detailed the socio-economic progress made, and also advances in the field of human rights. In that regard, the Committee welcomed the ratification by the Government of eight United Nations human rights conventions and its acceptance of the obligation to incorporate them in its domestic law. The report offered useful information on mechanisms used to disseminate legal information to the population, although knowledge of the law did not, of course, necessarily imply access to justice.
14. With regard to application of the Convention, she had read with interest paragraph 23 of the report, which affirmed that racial discrimination did not exist in Viet Nam. She had noted, however, that the head of the delegation of Viet Nam seemed to have an understanding of the concept of racial discrimination that differed from the detailed and clear definition—based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin—contained in the Convention. The fact that there were no racial categories as such in Viet Nam did not mean that there was no discrimination based on ethnic differences. The mere fact that laws and legal machinery and administrative mechanisms had been put in place to ensure equality suggested that economic and social disparities between ethnic groups did indeed exist. Consequently, she invited the Government of Viet Nam to reconsider its claim that racial discrimination did not exist, in the light of the definition contained in the Convention.

15. The Committee would also like to see more information on the 54 ethnic communities mentioned in paragraph 2 of the report, on how they were classified, and on what, other than simple regional differences, differentiated them. The Committee had already requested additional information on the ethnic composition of the population when considering the previous periodic report of Viet Nam.

16. Regarding the application of article 2 of the Convention, the Committee had asked the Government of Viet Nam to clarify whether the inhabitants of the South who had been involved in the armed struggle enjoyed the same rights as those who had supported the struggle in the North, and whether steps had been taken to benefit the ethnic minority groups in the mountainous regions, who were often seen as “second-class citizens”. The information provided in paragraphs 30 to 33 of the report, on measures taken to benefit the mountainous regions and ethnic minorities, was interesting, but did not give a full picture of the obstacles faced by the Government in that regard. Given that poverty still existed, particularly among children and women in ethnic minorities, the Committee would welcome fuller information about the American- and French-Vietnamese children and the children who had been victims of the war.

17. With regard to articles 4 to 6 of the Convention, the report provided a lengthy list of the various legislative instruments that protected the civil and political rights of minority ethnic groups in compliance with articles 2 and 3 of the Convention, but said nothing about how they were implemented or about the results obtained. More information on that point would be appreciated. Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) criticized the justice system, and in particular the People’s Courts, for lacking impartiality. The Committee would like more information on how those courts functioned, and on how they actually protected fundamental rights, particularly those of ethnic minorities. She was pleased to learn that the National Committee on Ethnic Affairs and Mountainous Regions was composed of representatives of the ethnic communities concerned. She would welcome further information on the consultations that took place with those communities to involve them in the work of the National Committee.

18. The situation of refugees repatriated from Cambodia, to which some NGOs had referred, was a matter of concern. Those involved were Vietnamese opponents of the Government who had fled to Cambodia and subsequently been deported back to Viet Nam, where they had been imprisoned.

19. The forced sterilization of Degar women, reported by an NGO representing the interests of the mountain people, was also a matter of concern. She requested the delegation of Viet Nam to provide more information on that matter. Similarly, the question of the transfer of members of the ethnic Kinh to the so-called indigenous territories so as to displace the indigenous communities, thereby leading to their marginalization or assimilation, called for comment by the delegation, in the light of the Government’s economic development strategy.

20. With regard to the application of article 6, the Committee welcomed the enactment of various legal instruments to protect civil rights, but would appreciate more information on their application.

21. With regard to article 7 of the Convention, the steps taken to disseminate information on those legal instruments were commendable, and mechanisms should be set up to assess the impact of those educational measures on society generally, and specifically, on the ethnic communities. In particular, it would be useful to know whether the information disseminated was put to good use, what means there were of obtaining access to justice, and to what extent the law genuinely protected the rights of the population.

22. Mr. de GOUTTES welcomed the resumption of dialogue with Viet Nam after an eight-year interruption. In the interval, the country had evolved greatly and, following the post-war period of economic and social reconstruction, had opened its doors to the market economy while remaining attached to the communist system. Progress had been made with regard to respect for the rule of law and human rights, as was witnessed by Viet Nam’s ratification of eight important international instruments (para. 18 of the report), the enhancement of legislation on fundamental rights and the development policy with regard to ethnic minorities. As to the form, the ninth periodic report

complied with the Committee's guidelines, consisting as it did of a first part devoted to general issues and a second part concerning implementation of the Convention. It could, however, be criticized for being too theoretical, as it dwelt at length on legislation without discussing its practical application or providing specific examples.

23. The demographic information provided in paragraph 2 of the report was too brief, and should have included a statistical table setting out population trends among the various ethnic communities, including variations between the majority group, the Kinh, and the 53 ethnic minorities.

24. With regard to application of article 2 of the Convention, the report cited the constitutional provisions relating to fundamental freedoms and equal rights, but made no mention of other texts likely to restrict those freedoms, particularly article 4 of the Constitution, which proclaimed the supremacy of the communist ideology, and article 70, which subordinated freedom of belief and religion to respect for the policy of the State. Similarly, the Criminal Code included restrictive provisions concerning infringements of national security, superstitious practices and anti-socialist propaganda. Article 205 (a) of the Code gave cause for concern, as it apparently permitted the prosecution of persons exercising fundamental rights and freedoms in such a manner as to harm the interests of the State. He asked what was the scope of that provision, which could potentially infringe fundamental rights and freedoms.

25. He welcomed the programmes and policies put in place for the benefit of the especially disadvantaged ethnic minorities in the mountainous regions. In particular, he welcomed the establishment of the Nationalities Council of the National Assembly, of the Committee on Ethnic Affairs and Mountainous Regions, of cluster centres for mountainous and highland communes, and of health programmes and programmes to support training, school attendance and school building for the benefit of ethnic minorities. It was also gratifying that representation of ethnic groups in the National Assembly and at local level was assured.

26. However, in spite of those encouraging measures, ethnic minorities continued to encounter a number of economic and social difficulties attributable to slow economic growth rates, poor infrastructure, high poverty and birth rates, and environmental degradation.

27. According to various NGOs, including the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), the Vietnam Committee on Human Rights and the Fondation pour les Montagnards, minorities continued to be the victims of discrimination, particularly in the areas of employment, education and health and social aid. Those NGOs also denounced a number of discriminatory measures: expropriation of land belonging to some mountain people, obstacles to Christian and animist religious practices, and to freedom of movement, ill treatment of ethnic minorities in mountainous regions by the police, and clashes, in the north and centre of the country, between indigenous populations and the armed forces during expropriation of indigenous lands. In April 2000, other clashes were alleged to have taken place between indigenous people and members of the Kinh majority who had attempted to settle in regions traditionally occupied by mountain people. Could the delegation confirm that information? Did it have any information on the forced sterilization of mountain women?

28. He noted that, in its 1993 concluding observations, the Committee had referred to the difficulties encountered by Catholic, Protestant and Buddhist religious minorities. Although freedom of religion was proclaimed in the Constitution, clerics were allegedly still subjected to close surveillance, harassment, intimidation and arbitrary arrest. It seemed that the national authorities, fearing that those religions might take on too much importance in Viet Nam, exercised tight control over churches and the activities of the various faiths. Could the delegation confirm whether it was true that about 20 Christian leaders of the H'mong ethnic group had been arrested, together with three Catholic monks?

29. He was particularly concerned at the situation of ethnic minority children and women in the mountainous regions, with regard, inter alia, to forced child labour, mainly in rural areas, and child prostitution, especially among girls. The Government was reported to have intervened to put an end to the intense trafficking in children for international adoption. What was the truth of the matter?

30. On the application of article 4 of the Convention, he considered that the State party had provided insufficient information in paragraphs 36 and 37 of the report, which simply cited article 87 of the Criminal Code, under which incitement to hatred, discrimination and division with regard to the different ethnic groups was subject to a term of imprisonment, and article 10 of the Law on the Press, which prohibited acts that incited violence or war and sowed hatred between nations and peoples. In order to fulfil its obligations under article 4 of the Convention, the State party should expand its criminal legislation so as to punish all acts contrary to the provisions of that article. Such legislation was necessary, if only as a preventive measure, even if the Government considered that racial discrimination did not exist in Viet Nam (para. 23).

31. With regard to application of article 6, he pointed out that no sentence had been pronounced by the courts for acts of racial discrimination. The Government should provide the Committee with information and statistics on that matter in its next periodic report.

32. Mr. VALENCIA RODRÍGUEZ stressed the multi-ethnic character of the Vietnamese population, which was made up of 54 ethnic communities, the largest being the Kinh community. He welcomed the reform process undertaken by the Government to move from a centrally planned economy to a multisectoral social market economy, which had resulted in strong, stable growth and a low rate of inflation. He also noted that the State encouraged social development, devoting 20 per cent of its budget to job creation, measures to combat hunger and poverty, education, population issues and family planning.

33. In the specific area of human rights, Viet Nam should be encouraged to continue the process of ratification of the various international human rights instruments. It was gratifying to learn that the international instruments prevailed over domestic law and were an integral part of Vietnamese law. Nonetheless, it would be useful to know whether international instruments in general, and the Convention in particular, were applicable even before they had been incorporated into domestic law.

34. He noted the affirmation that, racial discrimination being alien to the Vietnamese people, all ethnic groups coexisted peacefully and that, the country's policy was aimed at bridging the economic, cultural and social gap between the various ethnic minority groups, and between those groups and the rest of the population.

35. He welcomed the information concerning the application of article 2 of the Convention. Inter alia, the report described the activities of the Nationalities Council of the National Assembly and of the Committee on Ethnic Affairs and Mountainous Regions. He asked for further details on the composition of that Committee; in particular, he wished to know whether minorities were represented in its membership and what criteria were applied in recruiting its members. Noting that the various steps taken by the Government in favour of minorities and referred to in paragraphs 31 and 32 of the report related to basic aspects of the traditions of the groups concerned, he expressed the hope that the Vietnamese Government would inform the Committee of developments in their implementation and of the results obtained.

36. He regretted that fuller information had not been provided on the application of article 4, as it appeared from the report that only one article of the Criminal Code and one article of the Law on the Press took account of the obligations incumbent on States parties under that article. He asked what steps Viet Nam had taken to outlaw and prohibit organizations that engaged in incitement to racial discrimination, pointing out that, even if racial discrimination did not exist in Viet Nam, article 4 of the Convention was binding on all States parties.

37. On the other hand, copious information had been provided on article 5, covering almost all the provisions of that article. He stressed the general applicability of the principle of equality before the law, which permeated a number of provisions and practices relating to the application of article 5, and the right of members of ethnic communities to use their mother tongue in any court proceedings. He asked whether the services of interpreters were available.

38. He welcomed the fact that the Standing Committee of the National Assembly was responsible for deciding the number of deputies representing ethnic groups so as to ensure an appropriate number of ethnic deputies.

39. With regard to the right to work, it was noteworthy that the State accorded preferential treatment to workers from remote or geographically and economically disadvantaged regions. When not enough jobs were offered to members of minorities on a preferential basis or those jobs were poorly remunerated, could they obtain work elsewhere, for instance, in other remote regions?

40. He welcomed the measures taken in the field of education and training, which gave priority to primary education in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, and also the fact that it had been possible to eradicate illiteracy in almost all the provinces of the mountainous regions. Did the delegation have any statistics in that regard? It was also gratifying to note that Vietnamese legislation guaranteed citizens, including those from ethnic groups, the right to participate on an equal footing in the cultural life of the country. In that regard, he singled out the implementation of a pilot project to deliver some of the main daily newspapers free of charge to inaccessible, remote or isolated regions. When submitting its next periodic report, could the delegation inform the Committee of the results of that initiative, which might serve as an example to other countries?

41. It was regrettable that the section of the report dealing with article 6 of the Convention confined itself to listing the various provisions calling for protection and compensation of victims of violations of rights guaranteed by the Convention. It would be interesting to know whether any cases of that type had come before the courts, and, if so, whether compensation had been awarded to the victims. An answer in the negative might indicate either that racial discrimination did indeed not exist in Viet Nam, or that the population had not been informed of the relevant provisions of the Convention and of domestic law.

42. On application of article 7, he asked whether campaigns to enhance awareness of human rights accorded a prominent place to the Convention. Lastly, he thought it significant that, in spite of the results obtained, the report stressed the need to improve the economic and social circumstances of minorities as a matter of urgency. It was therefore to be hoped that the Committee would be informed of the progress made in that area.

43. Mr. TANG recalled that Viet Nam was a party to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, and that it condemned all contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and thus supported the convening of the World Conference against Racism.

44. At the national level, Viet Nam had implemented a wide range of measures to promote the interests of minorities. In that connection, he asked whether persons belonging to ethnic minorities in mountainous regions who, for economic reasons, had been encouraged to settle in more prosperous regions had received any financial assistance from the State. He also wished to know whether persons of Chinese origin had access to education in their mother tongue.

45. Ms. BRITZ said that the anti-discriminatory policies implemented in Viet Nam called for two comments. On the one hand, a number of programmes had been initiated to improve the economic, social and cultural situation of minorities, including an entirely laudable policy of preserving the culture, language and traditions of the various ethnic groups rather than assimilating them. On the other hand, those programmes were apparently imposed upon the minorities. She wondered whether that had happened in the case of the boarding school system for ethnic children (para. 96), the introduction of new means of production with a view to reducing poverty in Lai Chau province (para. 31 (e)), and population planning activities (para. 31 (c)).

46. On the composition of the National Assembly, she asked what was meant by a “relatively high” percentage of deputies representing ethnic people and “an appropriate number of ethnic deputies”. Could the delegation provide more precise data? Why had the legislature not fixed a specific number of representatives of ethnic minorities? Did the Nationalities Council of the National Assembly include members of the minorities?

47. Lastly, on an important point of language, she noted that the English-language version of the report consistently referred, for instance, to “ethnic children” and “ethnic areas”, rather than to “ethnic minority children” and “ethnic minority areas”, thereby implying not only that the Kinh majority did not belong to an ethnic group, but also that everything that was ethnic or different was not “normal”—a very dangerous assumption that might encourage racial discrimination.

48. Mr. DIACONU, noting that the Kinh majority accounted for 86 per cent of the population of Viet Nam and that the remainder was made up of 53 other ethnic communities, asked for more information on those communities. Did they live in the urban areas with the Kinh majority or in the highland and mountainous areas? Were some of them nomadic or were the efforts to encourage “sedentary living” targeted on seasonal workers who moved around the country?

49. His reaction to the claim that racial discrimination did not exist in Viet Nam would be to say that the Committee was interested, not only in flagrant cases of racial discrimination, such as ethnic conflicts or measures promoting inequality, but also in situations that might lead to acts of discrimination, for example, in the field of employment or education; and that it tried to identify the causes in order to suggest solutions to the State party concerned.

50. On article 4, the legislation in force appeared not to meet all the requirements of the Convention, as activities of organizations propagating racism were not explicitly prohibited in Viet Nam.

51. With regard to the 78 deputies (about 15 per cent of the total) representing the country’s 53 ethnic groups in the National Assembly, it would be interesting to know what methods—such as direct elections, or a quota system—had been used to achieve that level of representation. He asked the delegation to inform the Committee whether the State party envisaged acceding to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), and to provide him with fuller details of the preferential treatment extended to workers in remote regions and geographically and economically disadvantaged areas (para. 47 of the report), as that measure to benefit selected groups deserved to be encouraged. Similarly, the special measures described in paragraphs 92, 93 and 95 of the report were encouraging, as they should contribute greatly to improving the educational level of the target populations.

52. As to the system of administrative litigation referred to paragraph 106, and, in particular, the possibility for an individual to request the courts or competent state authority to nullify the administrative act infringing his or her rights, it would be helpful if the delegation indicated whether any complaints of discrimination had been brought before the courts, and, if so, what the outcome had been. Lastly, he asked whether the inhabitants of mountainous and highland regions were free to move about the country, to settle and to work in places other than their region of origin.

53. Mr. THORNBERRY said that the report did not contain enough geographical and demographic information to allow one to form an accurate picture of the ethnic composition of the population. Referring to paragraph 10, he asked whether adherents of religious faiths (Christians, Buddhists, animists etc.) could join the Communist Party. He would also welcome a brief description of what was understood by the concept of economic development in the context of the government policy to support ethnic minorities (para. 25). He also asked for fuller details of the cluster centres for mountainous and highland communes referred to in paragraph 31 of the report.

54. A 1997 World Bank report indicated that the official system of land ownership did not reflect the traditional ownership practices of the various population groups. It would be helpful if the delegation would provide the Committee with further details on that question, and, in particular, on whether the

collective ownership system could be applied to ethnic minorities. Further information on the boarding schools system for children of ethnic minorities would also be welcome.

55. With regard to the ILO conventions, he asked whether the State party envisaged ratifying the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), which laid down useful standards concerning, inter alia, the rights of indigenous peoples with regard to land ownership, participation in decision-making processes, education and employment. He would also welcome some elucidation of the information communicated by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on freedom of religion or belief, concerning the difficulties faced by the Catholic, Protestant and animist populations, and on the uprising alleged to have taken place in February 2001.

56. Mr. PILLAI asked for information on the persons who had returned to Viet Nam after being refused refugee status in Hong Kong, Thailand, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, including information on the ethnic composition of the populations concerned and the assistance measures and resettlement programmes available to them. He also wished to know whether the Government was intending to grant Vietnamese nationality to the Cambodian refugees of Vietnamese descent, and to the Cambodians of Chinese descent.

57. Mr. ABOUL-NASR, referring to the difficulties encountered by Vietnamese citizens who had collaborated with the former occupying powers, asked whether the Government was taking or envisaged taking any steps to encourage their return and reintegration, with a view to enabling them to participate in the country's recovery.

58. The CHAIRMAN said that the delegation of Viet Nam would reply to Committee members' questions at the next meeting.

Draft concluding observations concerning the eighth and ninth periodic reports of China (CERD/C/357/Add.4, parts I and II; CERD/C/59/Misc.16/Rev.2, document distributed in the meeting room, in English only)

Paragraph 1

59. Paragraph 1 was adopted.

Paragraph 2

60. Mr. PILLAI proposed replacing the phrase "an important number of governmental departments", in the fourth line, by "important governmental departments".

61. Paragraph 2, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 3

62. Paragraph 3 was adopted.

Paragraph 4

63. Mr. FALL proposed relocating paragraph 4 in the introduction to the draft concluding observations. Consequently, the title of section B would be replaced by that of section C.

64. It was so decided.

Paragraph 5

65. Mr. THORNBERRY proposed replacing, in the third line, the word "essentially" with "largely", and inserting, in the fifth line, a definite article before "investments in infrastructure development".

66. Paragraph 5, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraphs 6 and 7

67. Paragraphs 6 and 7 were adopted.

Paragraph 8

68. The CHAIRMAN proposed adding, in the fourth line, after the words “projects are already under way”, the words “in that region”.

69. Paragraph 8, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 9

70. Paragraph 9 was adopted.

Paragraph 10

71. Mr. BOSSUYT proposed deleting, in the fifth line, the word “alone”.

72. Mr. THORNBERRY proposed reformulating the first sentence so as to begin with the words: “In view of the dialogue held, the Committee wishes to emphasize that irrespective of the relationship between ...”.

73. Paragraph 10, as amended, was adopted.

74. Mr. FALL, supported by Mr. DIACONU, proposed relocating paragraph 10 after paragraph 4, in the introduction to the draft concluding observations.

75. It was so decided.

Paragraph 11

76. Mr. THORNBERRY proposed inserting at the start of the third sentence, after the words “In view of this”, the word “provision”. He also proposed deleting, in the last line, the words “the letter and spirit of”.

77. Paragraph 11, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 12

78. Mr. THORNBERRY proposed, in the eleventh line, deleting the definite article from the words “as well as the access to”.

79. Paragraph 12, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 13

80. Mr. BOSSUYT proposed replacing, in the second line, the expression “in itself” by “ipso facto”.

81. Mr. THORNBERRY proposed replacing, in the penultimate line, the phrase “the local and regional culture” by “the local and regional cultures and traditions”.

82. Paragraph 13, as amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 14

83. Mr. YUTSIS said there was no need to state, in the first line, that “some members of” the Committee remained concerned about the effective application of the right to freedom of religion of peoples belonging to national minorities in China. He proposed deleting the words “some members of”.

84. Mr. RESHETOV said he was categorically opposed to that proposal. He had visited Tibet and had seen no evidence that the population of that region did not enjoy freedom of religion. He rejected the proposal’s implication, namely that the Committee as a whole was concerned about the enjoyment of freedom of religion in China.

85. Mr. YUTSIS said that, so as to take account of Mr. Reshetov’s comments, the categorical tone of which he nevertheless regretted, he could accept the retention of the words in question. Furthermore, he would not wish to prolong the debate needlessly on such a sterile issue.

86. Paragraph 14 was adopted without amendment.

87. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would continue its consideration of the draft concluding observations on the eighth and ninth periodic reports of China at its next meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.