



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Distr.: General
19 February 2010
English
Original: French

Human Rights Committee

Ninety-seventh session

Summary record of the 2684th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 30 October 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Iwasawa

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Organizational and other matters (agenda item 3)

1. **The Chairperson** said that at the current session the Committee had adopted 22 decisions under article 5, paragraph 4, of the Optional Protocol: 6 communications had been declared admissible, 7 inadmissible. The Committee had considered the merits of 8 communications and had concluded that in 6 cases the rights enshrined in the Covenant had been violated; in 2 other cases, it had found that there had been no violation of the Covenant, and it had decided to discontinue consideration of one communication. At its meeting on 28 October, the Bureau had recommended that Mr. Lallah should be appointed as focal point for relations with the special procedures mandate holders, Ms. Majodina as focal point for relations with non-governmental organizations and Mr. Pérez Sánchez-Cerro as coordinator for relations with the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.
2. The Bureau had recommended a draft agenda for the ninety-eighth session, to be held in New York in March 2010. The Committee would consider the fourth report of Argentina, the fifth report of New Zealand, the third report of Uzbekistan and the fifth report of Mexico. It would also draw up six draft lists of issues, five of which would be for consideration of the following periodic reports: the sixth report of Poland, the fifth report of Belgium, the third report of Jordan, the fifth report of Hungary and the second report of Serbia. It would also prepare one other list of issues for a State party that had not submitted a report. In accordance with the rules of procedure, reminders had been sent to seven State parties that had not submitted their report, setting a deadline. Those States had been informed that a list of issues to be considered would be drawn up if they did not send their report to the Committee in time.
3. On 28 October 2009, the Bureau had met with the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) documents services and had discussed the various problems concerning the translation of documents with them. Serious budgetary or practical difficulties were complicating the situation, but the Bureau would continue its efforts to improve matters.
4. The Bureau recommended marking the one hundredth session of the Committee, to be held in October 2010, by a special event. He suggested organizing a three-hour symposium to take place at the Palais des Nations during the second week of the session, to which eminent persons and academics could be invited to give presentations, followed by debates. He invited members of the Committee to make suggestions on that matter.
5. **Mr. O'Flaherty** said he thought it an excellent idea to organize such an event, which would provide an opportunity to bring together various human rights stakeholders. He suggested that invitations should be extended to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and also to former members of the Committee, which would give the event a historical perspective. It would also be an excellent opportunity to issue a publication.
6. **Ms. Motoc** agreed with Mr. O'Flaherty and added that national institutions should also be invited.
7. **Mr. Thelin** said that the idea of such an event was excellent but wondered if a three-hour symposium was too short. It would also be a good opportunity to ask an outside specialist to analyse the Committee's operating procedure and propose possible reforms.
8. **Ms. Motoc** said that, in her view, proposing to entrust such a task to one person was a sensitive issue. The need to ensure a regional balance should also be taken into account.
9. **Ms. Majodina** said that there was no need to call in outside experts. The members of the Committee, some of whom had served for many years, were quite capable of

carrying out a critical analysis of the Committee's operation. Moreover, there were already many academic publications on the subject.

10. **Mr. Rivas Posada** said that, first, the purpose of the celebration should be determined. One possibility was to draw up a kind of inventory of the Committee's contribution. Another, which he preferred, was to ask the outside world (academics, researchers, lawyers and NGOs) what their perception was of the work of the Committee and its influence.

11. **Mr. Amor** agreed that it was a very good idea to celebrate the one hundredth session, as it would serve to gauge perceptions of the Committee among States, NGOs of the North and the South, researchers and academics, as well as former members of the Committee. It was unlikely that the funds required to organize a large-scale event could be found, but it would no doubt be possible to invite some selected speakers. A whole day would not be too much for such an event, during which outside speakers could give their presentations before a subsequent debate with members of the Committee.

12. **Mr. O'Flaherty** said that the Committee should investigate the possibility of using the technique of videoconferencing which, in particular, would help to ensure equitable geographical representation. He also proposed that a preparatory group should be set up at the beginning of the March session and should submit a preliminary report to the Committee at the end of the session.

13. **The Chairperson** supported Mr. O'Flaherty's proposals. As for the duration of the event, it certainly would be ideal to be able to devote a whole day to it. However, the Committee's workload was so heavy that it would perhaps have to be content with half a day.

14. **Sir Nigel Rodley** said that preparations should commence as soon as possible to be sure of securing the participation of the desired speakers. In short, the aim of the event would be to organize an interactive debate with observers, academics, practitioners and other persons interested in the work of the Committee, who would give an outsider's view of its activities. To devote no more than half a day to the event, albeit important, would seem inappropriate in view of how far behind the Committee was with its work.

15. **Mr. Thelin** said that, on the contrary, the importance of the event justified devoting a whole day to it. He agreed that preparatory work should begin as soon as possible.

16. **Mr. O'Flaherty** said that to devote a whole day to the event would not be a waste of time, provided that the Committee made sure that it was more than just a sterile, diplomatic exchange of views. In that context, it was important to publish a document which could, for example, be a compilation of the presentations given, accompanied by a historical profile of the Committee. A similar publication already existed but it was more than six years old. As for the preparations, it would be better not to begin until the March session, in order to have time to set up a representative preparatory group.

17. **Mr. Bouzid** asked if it would be possible to organize the celebration on a Saturday, which would solve the problem of its duration.

18. **The Chairperson** suggested that the symposium should take place on the last Friday of the session.

19. **Ms. Motoc** emphasized that it was essential to guarantee equitable geographical representation, the participation of NGOs and the publication of a final document.

20. **Ms. Majodina** said that it was important to devote a whole day to the event. Although time was short, it appeared difficult to begin organization immediately. It would be better to set up a preparatory group at the beginning of the March session to develop the

project during the session, which would not prevent the Secretariat from commencing work on the matter straight away.

21. **The Chairperson** said that the resources required to organize the event should be given consideration before the publication of a document was contemplated. He suggested that thought should already be given to the preparations and that a working group should be set up to make specific proposals to the Committee at the March session.

Closure of the session

22. After an exchange of courtesies, **the Chairperson** declared the ninety-seventh session of the Committee closed.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.