

to provide, at their request, technical services to governments seeking to implement the recommendations of the SR;

In Section V (on the Convention on racial discrimination), the CHR: appealed to states that have not done so to consider ratifying and acceding to the Convention; encouraged states to limit the extent of any reservations entered and to formulate reservations as narrowly as possible; called on states parties to adopt measures immediately aimed at elimination of all forms of racial discrimination; requested states parties that have not done so to consider making a declaration under article 14 (individual complaints procedure); and;

In Section VI (World Conference on Racism), the CHR: recommended to the General Assembly the convening of a world conference on racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, with the following main objectives: (a) to review progress made in the fight against racism and reappraise obstacles to further progress and ways to overcome them; (b) to consider ways and means better to ensure application of existing standards and implementation of existing relevant instruments; (c) to increase the level of awareness about the prevalence of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; (d) to formulate concrete recommendations on ways to increase the effectiveness of activities and mechanisms of the UN to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; (e) to review the political, historic, economic, social, cultural and any other factors leading to racism and related intolerance; (f) to formulate concrete recommendations to further action-oriented national, regional and international measures to combat all forms of racism and related intolerance; (g) draw up concrete recommendations to ensure that the UN has the financial and other necessary resources for its action to combat racism and related intolerance; recommended that the world conference be convened not later than the year 2001; recommended that the General Assembly, in considering a draft agenda for the world conference, take into account the need to address in a comprehensive manner all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related contemporary forms of intolerance; stressed the importance of taking into account a gender perspective systematically throughout preparation of the conference; recommended that the world conference be action-oriented and focus on practical measures to eradicate racism, including through measures of prevention, education and protection and provision of effective remedies; recommended that the Commission on Human Rights act as the preparatory committee for the world conference and that its deliberations be open-ended; requested governments, agencies, bodies and organizations, including NGOs, to submit recommendations concerning the conference and preparations for it and to participate actively in the conference; recommended that the General Assembly: (a) call on states and regional organizations to hold national or regional meetings or take other measures to prepare for the conference; and, (b) request regional meetings to submit reports to the preparatory committee on the outcome of their deliberations.

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RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance (E/CN.4/1997/91; A/52/477)

The mandate of the Special Rapporteur (SR) on religious intolerance was created by the Commission in 1986 and given the specific task of identifying incidents and government actions that are inconsistent with provisions in the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. The SR was also requested to make recommendations on remedial measures that should be taken to ensure compliance by states with the provisions of the Declaration. In 1997, the SR was Mr. Abdelfattah Amor (Tunisia).

The report to the 1997 Commission notes that the Special Rapporteur had addressed communications to governments alleging problems or violations related to religious intolerance affecting a number of religions, religious groups and religious communities, including: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Baha'is, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hare Krishna, Al Arqam, Darul Arqam, Mormons, Navajos (Dine) and Apaches. The allegations arose from various concerns, including discriminatory policies, laws and/or regulations related to religion or belief, religious extremism, violations of freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, violations of the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, freedom to dispose of religious property and violations of the right to life, physical integrity and health.

The section of the report dealing with conclusions and recommendations considers aspects of religious freedom arising from the rights to change religion and conscientious objection. Commentary is also provided on religious freedom and human rights, religion and politics, religious freedom and religious extremism and religious freedom and sects. The recommendations drawn from these considerations include that:

- ▶ a high-level governmental meeting agree upon a collective approach to sects and religions that respects human rights;
- ▶ the Commission mandate a study on the phenomena of sects and religious freedom; and
- ▶ a department on religious freedom and human rights be established within the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to increase, channel and target information on the religious situation around the world, leading to the creation of a database to enable more thorough analysis and investigation in the area of religious freedom.

The Commission will consider renewal of the mandate on religious intolerance in 1998.

At its 1997 session, the Commission adopted a resolution on religious intolerance (1997/18) by consensus. The Commission, *inter alia*: emphasized that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is far-reaching and encompasses freedom of thought on all matters, personal conviction and commitment to religion or belief manifested either individually or in community with others; condemned all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief; urged states to ensure that constitutional and legal