

demographic and statistical data as well as information on the economy, the political system, and the judiciary.

Two national institutions on human rights have been established Democracy, Freedom and Development and the Human Rights Association which deal with freedom of association. Efforts have been made to publicize and disseminate information on various human rights instruments on radio (in French and national languages) and television as well as through the newspapers, plays and songs. The freedom and independence of media, including the press, are guaranteed by the Supreme Communications Council that is an independent administrative authority. The Council monitors media ethics and fair access of political parties, associations and citizens to official information and communications media.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Acceded: 7 March 1986.

Niger's initial report was due 30 June 1990; the second periodic report was due 30 June 1995.

Civil and Political Rights

Acceded: 7 March 1986.

Niger's second periodic report was due 31 March 1994; the third periodic report was due 6 June 1997.

Optional Protocol: Acceded: 7 March 1986.

Racial Discrimination

Signed: 14 March 1966; ratified: 27 April 1967.

Niger's 11th through 14th periodic reports have been submitted as one document (CERD/C/299/Add.18) which was considered at the Committee's August 1998 session; the 15th periodic report was due 4 January 1998.

Torture

Acceded: 5 October 1998.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 26 January 1990; ratified: 30 September 1990.

Niger's initial and second periodic reports were due 29 October 1992 and 1997 respectively.

REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Niger's 11th through 14th periodic reports were submitted as one document (CERD/C/299/Add.18, August 1997) which was considered by the Committee at its August 1998 session. The consolidated report, prepared by the government, states that racial discrimination does not exist in Niger and notes Order No. 84-6 of 1 March 1984 establishing the regulations banning associations of a regional or ethnic character. The report includes information on, *inter alia*: the general legal framework for the prohibition of racial discrimination; ethnic and demographic characteristics; constitutional and legal provisions related to specific propaganda of a regionalist,

racial or ethnic character or any manifestation of racial or ethnic discrimination; provisions generally related to civil and political rights; the rights to housing, health and education; educational programmes aimed at tolerance and mutual respect; and human rights education in the schools.

The Committee's concluding observations and comments (A/53/18, paras. 445-464) welcomed the signing of an agreement to establish peace between the government and the Organisation de la Résistance armée (ORA) in 1995, as well as the establishment of the High Commissioner's Office for the Restoration of Peace. The Committee took note of the various activities being carried out in the fields of culture and education and, in particular, the strengthening of the itinerant schools system, as well as planned measures for the administrative decentralization of the country as a means of finding better solutions to the problems of the various communities.

Factors hindering implementation of the Convention were seen to include the fragility of the government's process of democratization, the very low standard of living, the geographical and climatological situation, the extremely high population growth rate and the very low literacy rate.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee included, *inter alia*: acts of violence against persons belonging to certain ethnic groups, particularly the Toubous; the lack of information about measures for incorporating ORA armed forces into the army and the country's civil activities, and the participation of various ethnic groups in public life; the lack of specific legal provisions prohibiting racial discrimination and the absence of a specific prohibition on the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination and provocation or acts of violence or assistance in racist acts; the ambiguity of Order No. 84-6 (1984) governing associations and prohibiting those of a regional or ethnic nature, which may also lead to the prohibition of cultural associations that have no involvement in acts of racial discrimination; the lack of information on the implementation of provisions in the Convention related to the participation of the various ethnic groups in political life; and the lack of information on foreign refugees in Niger and the return of Niger refugees from abroad.

The Committee recommended that the government, *inter alia*:

- ♦ provide information, in the next report, on relations between the country's various ethnic groups and on efforts to encourage them to live together peacefully and harmoniously;
- ♦ develop its Penal Code to conform with the provisions of the Convention with regard to the prohibition of racist organizations, actions and speech; and provide information, in the next report, on racially motivated offences as well as complaints and judicial decisions concerning racist acts, regardless of their nature;