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OMAN

Date of admission to UN: 7 October 1971.

TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

Land and People: Oman has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

Rights of the Child

Acceded: 9 December 1996.

Oman's initial report is due 1 April 1999.

Reservations and Declarations: Paragraph 4 of article 9; articles 7, 14, 21 and 30.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on: (A/52/477, paras. 21, 25, 28, 30, 33, 38, 41)

The Special Rapporteur's interim report to the General Assembly notes that communications were sent to the government related to violations of religious freedom against all religious groups and communities except for the official, state or predominant religion, namely non-Muslims; this has included the prohibition of proselytizing by non-Muslims aimed at Muslims and the prohibition on the publication of non-Muslim material. The government responded, indicating that domestic legislation guaranteed freedom of religion and religious observance.

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PAKISTAN

Date of admission to UN: 30 September 1947.

TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

Land and People: Pakistan has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

Racial Discrimination

Signed: 19 September 1966; ratified: 21 September 1966.

Pakistan's 15th periodic report was due 4 January 1998.

The Committee considered Pakistan's 10th through 14th periodic reports, submitted as one document (CERD/C/299/Add.6), at its March 1997. The consolidated report prepared by the government contained information on: constitutional provisions and laws related to discrimination, demographic data, the press and institutional arrangements and other measures related to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. In the report, the government stated "The problem of racism and racial discrimination does not exist in Pakistan and the Government has taken effective measures to prevent incitement to or acts of discrimination based on theories of superiority of race, colour or ethnic origin (CERD/C/199/Add.6, para. 54)."

The Committee's concluding observations and comments (CERD/C/304/Add.25) referred to factors affecting implementation of the Convention, namely, the multiethnic and

multicultural society in Pakistan, the extreme poverty of certain groups, the presence of 1.2 million Afghan refugees, and the climate of violence in certain parts of the country.

The Committee viewed the completion of the democratic process, with the regular holding of elections, as a positive step towards better protection of human rights in general and full compliance with the Convention. Pakistan's definition of minorities based on the religious affiliation of the persons concerned and not on ethnic, racial or linguistic grounds was noted and the Committee commented that while religious minorities as such do not fall under the scope of the Convention religious differences may coincide with ethnic differences. On that basis, the Committee welcomed the constitutional provisions on non-discrimination and the institutions and measures that have been established to promote and protect minority rights, such as the Minorities Affairs Division, the National Commission for Minorities, the Federal Advisory Council for Minorities Affairs, the Districts Minority Committees and the National Committee on the Kalash People, as well as the monthly holding of meetings with minority members of the National Assembly.

The establishment of a Ministry of Human Rights was viewed positively, as was the role played by Pakistan's national Commission on Human Rights, in identifying and criticizing human rights violations, including those committed by the police and armed forces. Other developments received positively by the Committee included: the repeal of the separate electoral system which allowed members of minorities to vote only for certain reserved seats in elections; the fact that members of minorities are now entitled to participate directly in the general election process, in addition to electing their own representatives; for the first time since Pakistan's independence, the direct participation in national elections of the inhabitants of the Tribal Areas; measures taken and campaigns to promote human rights education and to raise people's awareness of their rights and obligations; and the planned incorporation of human rights education in the school curricula.

The Committee expressed concern that the state policy of recognizing only religious minorities excludes ethnic, linguistic or racial groups living in the country from any specific protection under the Convention that would derive from their official recognition as minorities. Regret was expressed that Pakistan's laws do not fully comply with article 4 (b) of the Convention in terms of declaring illegal organizations and activities which promote and incite racial discrimination. The Committee indicated a number of areas where the information provided in Pakistan's report was inadequate. These areas included: lack of specific information on the laws and regulations concerning the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the North-West Frontier Province, as well as on the economic and social situation in those areas; lack of information on the implementation of article 4 of the Convention and non-compliance in Pakistani laws regarding the obligation to declare illegal organizations and activities that promote and incite racial discrimination; insufficient information on the practical effect of provisions related to equality before the law and security of person; insufficient disaggregated information on the participation in public life, as well as economic and social indicators, especially in connection with access to employment, housing, education and health, of the various