

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

- ♦ reconsider the reservations entered to the Covenant with the object of determining whether their continuance is necessary;
- ♦ take urgent steps — by way of education, encouragement and legal means — to reduce or eliminate inequalities in rights for women and men and include in the next report statistical data and other information on the *de facto* situation of women;
- ♦ maintain due vigilance over the outcome of complaints made against members of the carabinieri and against prison officers;
- ♦ reduce the maximum period during which a person may be held in custody following arrest on a criminal charge, even in exceptional circumstances, to less than the present five days and ensure that the arrested person is entitled to access to legal advice immediately upon arrest;
- ♦ with regard to preventive detention before and after trial, discontinue the linkage between the offence with which a person has been charged and the length of detention from the time of arrest up to final sentence; restrict the grounds for preventive detention to those cases in which such detention is essential to protect legitimate interests, such as the appearance of the accused at the trial;
- ♦ pay urgent attention to correcting the problem of prison overcrowding;
- ♦ take further measures to expedite both criminal and civil trials, and improve the efficiency and promptness of the entire system of justice; and
- ♦ continue to take all measures by way of, for example, legal constraint and education to eradicate racial intolerance.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Racism and racial discrimination, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/79, paras. 34, 60–63)

The report refers to an incident in which insults were reportedly uttered against two black Brazilian international footballers. The Special Rapporteur also referred to two other cases in which, according to information received, a Ghanaian citizen was allegedly beaten by police officers at Leonardo da Vinci International Airport at Fiumicino while in transit between Denmark and Ghana, and a woman of Italian nationality but Nigerian origin was allegedly physically assaulted in a xenophobic manner by police officers. The woman claimed that when she stated she was an Italian citizen, she was told that “a black woman cannot be an Italian citizen”.

In the reply to the allegation of police brutality against the Ghanaian, the government stated that inquiries failed to confirm that a beating had taken place and, further, that the photograph of the incident, upon which the allegation was partly based, had not been taken at the airport and bears neither the name of a witness nor the address of the person who took it. The government decided that the complainant had been beaten in his own country in January 1997 and, as a result, received medical care in February 1997. With regard to the second complaint, the government stated that the case, between the plaintiff and the police officers whom she resisted when they tried to arrest her, was being heard.

Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, Special Rapporteur on the: (E/CN.4/1998/101, paras. 21, 22)

The report notes that there is a new law in Italy which classifies the sexual exploitation of children as slavery, imposing a 12-year prison sentence on the offenders. Parliament has discussed a new bill to increase sentences for sexual exploitation of children or the organization of sex tourism, which shall apply to Italians exploiting children abroad. The bill known as the “Promotion of the Rights and Opportunities for Childhood and Adolescence Bill”, would also create harsh sentences for people producing and/or disseminating material using children through the Internet. The government intends to provide psychological help for the children suffering abuse, as well as their perpetrators.

The Special Rapporteur’s (SR) interim report to the 1998 General Assembly (A/53/311, paras. 24, 87) refers to a case involving the sexual abuse and murder of a small boy near Naples in 1997, and notes that in November 1998 police arrested three men in connection with the crime. The SR stated that the murder highlighted the urgent need for action, both nationally and internationally, to combat highly organized child pornography rings and access to paedophile material on the Internet.

The SR noted that, in an effort to combat trafficking in women and children, Italy and the U.S. recently established a Working Group on Trafficking in Women and Children. At the Group’s first meeting in Rome in April 1998, certain joint actions were agreed, including: the exchange of best practices with respect to assistance, protection and social integration of victims; implementation of common initiatives, including joint programme strategies for victim outreach, separately in Italy and the U.S. which should provide for the protection of victims’ families in source countries; training for law enforcement, immigration and border officials in source countries to help them to identify patterns and methods of trafficking and prevent trafficking through effective investigation and prosecution; and the development of witness protection procedures and victim services in source countries for cases of repatriation, including training for law enforcement officials and assistance to NGOs that provide victim services.

