

With regard to anti-Semitism the SR stated that the phenomenon continues to develop on the Internet and the resurgence of the extreme right in Europe has so intensified the spread of classic ideas on anti-Semitism that there is a marked increase in violent anti-Semitic acts, such as vandalization.

Referring to the exploitation and manipulation of ethnicity for political purposes, the report notes that, in some sub-Saharan African countries, the criteria for defining ethnic groups (territory, language, race) can either be factors for integration and unification or factors for differentiating between different ethnic groups within given geographical areas on the basis of deep-rooted historical and cultural stereotypes. The SR then stated, generally: politics in many countries seems to be based essentially on ethnic and/or regional considerations; the ethnic group is therefore a political instrument and pawn (gaining and maintaining power/building the electoral base); the ethnic group and/or region are fully taken into account in carrying out a skilful distribution of political posts as part of what is described as a broad-based government of national unity, which is really more the result of attempts to achieve a balance between the regions or ethnic groups; such a balance is perceived as a means of strengthening a nation's cohesion, solidarity and unity; this concern for regional or ethnic balance is also a factor in appointments to key state managerial positions; and, as a result, ethnic groups are exploited and manipulated to a great extent for political purposes. The SR also noted that, in sub-Saharan Africa, ethnic areas have always constituted, and still constitute, the electoral base of leaders and politicians; such leaders often make speeches with heavy ethnic undertones, paying occasional lip-service to national unity or integration; and it is still difficult for liberal democracy based on individual rights and human dignity to take root, although some progress has been noted.

On the Internet and racism, the report simply notes that the use of the Internet to incite racial hatred is continuing and there are over 200 sites worldwide disseminating racist propaganda.

The SR recommended that:

- ♦ as part of the preparations for the World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, regional and sub-regional meetings of experts (in Africa, Asia and the Americas) be encouraged and promoted with the assistance of the specialized agencies in the UN system; and
- ♦ a body on neo-fascism, neo-Nazism and ethno-nationalism be established to study such phenomena, in close cooperation with the SR, and states be invited to communicate relevant information to this body.

The seminar on immigration, racism and racial discrimination

The seminar was held in Geneva from 5 to 9 May 1997 and addressed: contemporary forms and manifestations of racism and racial discrimination, globalization and immigration, national and international protection of immigrants, protection of immigrants against discrimination in access to employment (activities of the ILO), and integration and/or preservation of immigrants' cultural identities in host countries. The report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1998/77/Add.1) notes that participants included experts from both international and national bodies and institutions, experts appointed by a number of governments who participated in their personal capacity, and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Six background papers were prepared for the seminar: (a) "National protection of immigrants" (HR/GVA/DR/1997/SEM.2/BP.1); (b) "International protection of immigrants" (HR/GVA/DR/1997/SEM.2/BP.2); (c) "Combating discrimination against migrant workers: international standards, national legislation and voluntary measures - the need for a multi-pronged strategy" (HR/GVA/DR/1997/SEM.2/BP.3); (d) "Integration and/or preservation of immigrants' identity in host countries: between goodwill and discrimination" (HR/GVA/DR/1997/SEM.2/BP.4); (e) "Contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination against immigrants" (HR/GVA/DR/1997/SEM.2/BP.5); and (f) "Globalization and immigration" (HR/GVA/DR/1997/SEM.2/BP.6).

Discussions of contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination against immigrants were based on a number of points including, *inter alia*, that: (a) there has been an alarming upsurge of racism, xenophobia and intolerance, particularly in so-called democratic societies; (b) any form of racism involves discrimination and the new forms are predominantly economic; and (c) the "minority" of foreign workers are the new victims, while concealed discrimination is being committed against women.

Within this context a number of points were made including, *inter alia*: there is a need to establish an individual remedy procedure designed to enforce the principle of non-discrimination at the social level; regulation of the global marketplace has become an acutely political issue; one means of controlling access to the labour market is by allowing different rights to different categories of workers; it is an open question whether a policy in which the rich countries would invest so as to improve employment prospects in the poor countries is practical, bearing in mind that the high population growth rates in poor countries are an obstacle to such policies; there is a need to find ways of reaching public opinion in countries experiencing immigration and boosting support in the general public for international norms; the social effects of immigration will depend on whether the labour supplied by immigrants is perceived as competitive with, or