

establishment of such textbooks and curricula in isolation from any state intervention, notably control of their compatibility with national and international legislation;

- ♦ in connection with the content of textbooks and curricula, questions arise concerning the situation in two kinds of states, first those which pay absolutely no heed to questions of religion and belief, and secondly those which focus exclusively on a particular religion or belief; and
- ♦ referring to teachers, questions sometimes arise concerning the adequacy of their training for the purpose of giving religious instruction and teaching the values of tolerance and non-discrimination.

On individual or group cases and incidents, the report notes that, during the period under review, communications were sent to 51 governments and referred to: violations of religious freedom and belief against Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Ahmadis, Baha'is, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hare Krishna, Scientology; violations of freedom of religion and belief affecting either "all religions, all religious groups and communities except the official or state religion or the predominant religion" or "all religions, all religious groups and communities"; violations of the principle of non-discrimination, related to discriminatory policies and/or legislation in the field of religion and belief; violations of the principle of tolerance in matters of religion and belief; violations of freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, with conscientious objection being a particularly important issue; violations of the freedom to change one's religion; violations of the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief; violations of the freedom to dispose of religious property; and violations of physical integrity and health, and the right to life.

The report notes the preference of the SR to have the title of the mandate changed from "Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance" to "Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief" on the basis that the new title: (a) would encompass not only freedom of religion but also freedom of belief, viz. agnosticism, freethinking, atheism and rationalism; (b) would not carry the negative connotations of intolerance and discrimination and would therefore be neutral; and (c) would be easy to use.

Recommendations address four main areas: the interdependence of human rights, religious extremism, "sects" and "new religious movements", and women. The report recommends that:

- ♦ the necessary resources to undertake a study on "proselytism, freedom of religion and poverty" be provided to the SR, on the basis that action to promote religious freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination is closely linked to action to promote democracy and development; and extreme poverty in particular can render all rights and freedoms illusory and encourage extremism and violence;
- ♦ a study be made of religious extremism and that a "minimum set of standard rules and principles of conduct and behaviour in respect of religious extremism" be defined and adopted by the international community, on the basis that religious extremism: can produce situations which are difficult to control and can imperil the human right to peace; constitutes an assault on both freedom and religion; is not limited to any society or religion; and, when tolerated, is tolerance of the intolerable and must be condemned unequivocally and combatted;
- ♦ the necessary resources be made available to enable the SR to initiate studies of the problem of "sects and new religious movements", on the basis that: the issue of "sects" or "new religious movements" is complicated by the fact that international human rights instruments provide no definition of the concept of religion and do not mention the concepts of "sect" and "new religious movement"; although the idea of a sect was originally a neutral one — and meant a community of individuals constituting a minority within a religion and having split from it — the term often now has a pejorative connotation and is frequently regarded as synonymous with danger, and sometimes a non-religious dimension when it is identified as a commercial enterprise; and the term "sect" therefore needs further clarification, as do the terms "religions", "new religious movements" and "commercial enterprise"; and
- ♦ a study of discrimination against women attributable specifically to their status as women within churches and religions be undertaken.

### Resolution of the Commission on Human Rights

Under agenda item 18 the Commission adopted by consensus one resolution (1998/18). The Commission, *inter alia*: emphasized that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief encompasses freedom of thought on all matters, personal conviction and the commitment to religion or belief, whether manifested individually or in community with others; condemned all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief; urged states to ensure that their constitutional and legal systems provide adequate and effective guarantees of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief to all without discrimination, including provision for effective remedy; urged states to ensure that no one in their jurisdiction is deprived of the rights to life, liberty or security of person because of religion or belief; urged states to take all necessary actions to combat hatred, intolerance, violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by intolerance based on religion or belief, including practices which violate human rights for women and discriminate against women; urged states to recognize the right of all persons to worship or assemble, ensure that relevant authorities respect different religions and beliefs, ensure that religious places, sites and shrines are fully respected and protected, and promote