

RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

There were five reports related to racism and racial discrimination prepared for the 1998 session of the Commission on Human Rights: one by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, two by the Secretary-General, one related to a seminar on the subject of migration, racism and racial discrimination and one from an expert seminar on the subject of the role of the Internet within the context of provisions in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

With regard to the reports of the Secretary-General, the first (E/CN.4/1998/77) summarizes information provided by governments and others related to activities to combat racism and racial discrimination and in connection with the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. The second report (E/CN.4/1998/78) was prepared, as requested by Commission resolution 1997/74, and contains a summary of information provided by states and others on measures taken to implement the 1997 resolution.

Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

The mandate of the Special Rapporteur (SR) of the Commission on Human Rights was created in 1993 and renewed for a further three years by the Commission at its 1996 session. The SR during 1998 was Mr. Glélé-Ahanhanzo.

The 1998 report (E/CN.4/1998/79) contains information on, *inter alia*: various activities of the SR; missions under consideration; the UN seminar on immigration, racism and racial discrimination; the seminar on the Internet and racism; discrimination against Blacks (negrophobia); racism and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims; anti-Semitism; discrimination against the Roma, Gypsies or travellers; migrant workers and discrimination; and incitement to racial hatred on the Internet.

In addition to information related to the two seminars hosted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (see below) the report refers briefly to a seminar held in Cotonou (Benin) in June 1997 as part of the activities of the Institute for Human Rights and the Promotion of Democracy. The meeting focussed on: problem areas related to discrimination in all its forms in Black Africa [sic]; relations between ethnic groups in the Sahel countries; the problems of ethnicity, nationalities and relations between ethnic groups in Central Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region; discrimination against women and children: the case of Benin (Vidomégons); and relations between the peoples of the Gulf of

Benin and members of the non-African communities (Europeans, Lebanese, Syrians, Indians, Pakistanis, etc.). The report states that in light of the World Conference on Racism and Xenophobia, likely to be held in the year 2001, similar meetings should be organized at the sub-regional and regional levels in other parts of the world.

The SR repeated recommendations made in previous years, including that:

- ♦ the possibility be considered at the international level of immediately beginning studies, research and consultations on the use of the Internet to incite hatred, racist propaganda and xenophobia, and drawing up a programme of human rights education and exchanges over the Internet;
- ♦ states which have not already done so ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- ♦ states, which do not yet have such institutions, establish human rights commissions with responsibility, in particular, for studying the question of racism and racial discrimination and for securing adoption of appropriate measures; and
- ♦ the governments of the countries visited by the SR regularly provide information on the steps taken to follow up on the recommendations arising from the field mission.

The SR's interim report to the 1998 General Assembly (A/53/269) includes information on, *inter alia*: the resurgence of neo-fascism and neo-Nazism; discrimination against immigrants and migrant workers; anti-Semitism; exploitation and manipulation of ethnicity for political purposes; the Internet and racism.

The report states that neo-fascism and neo-Nazism are gaining ground in many countries, especially in Europe, as reflected by the electoral victories of extreme right parties advocating xenophobia, attacks on ethnic, national and religious minorities, and racial or ethnic purity in the countries where they are active. The report notes: these parties are exploiting an economic and social climate characterized by fear and despair; they have re-styled themselves to look like radical right wing democratic parties, softening their image while enabling them to conceal an unchanged preference for racism and xenophobia; for purely electoral motives, classic right wing parties are increasingly embracing the slogans of extreme right wing parties; and this growing increase in the power of extreme right wing parties is a cause for concern.

On discrimination against immigrants and migrant workers, the report refers to the situation in Africa and notes that some countries have organized charters for the large-scale deportation of undocumented aliens or have detained such aliens in holding camps prior to their repatriation.