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THIRD COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE 4

DRAFT INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Report by Mr. P. Ryckmans (Belgium) of the group of
linguistic experts of Sub-Committee 4

At its tenth meeting, held on 4 December 1948, Sub-Committee 4 of the Third Committee, set up a group of five members:

Belgium (Mr. P. Ryckmans)
China (Mr. P.Y. Tsao)
Cuba (Mr. Guy P. Cisneros)
United Kingdom (Mr. R. Ledward)
USSR (Mr. Alexander P. Borisov)

for the purpose of checking and ensuring the exact concordance in the five official languages of the text of the Draft International Declaration of Human Rights, taking the English and French texts as adopted by the Third Committee as their basis.

The Secretariat of the United Nations placed experts in these languages at the group's disposal.

At its first meeting on 5 December 1948, the group agreed to split up into four sub-groups:

1. the English-French group
2. the Chinese group
3. the Russian group
4. the Spanish group

The first of these was instructed to report on the original English and French texts.

The other three were instructed to prepare a draft text in their respective languages, corresponding to the Committee's text.

The group met again in plenary meeting on 7 December under the Chairmanship of Mr. Ryckmans. At this meeting it studied simultaneously the concordance of the texts in the other three official languages with the texts in the two working languages as prepared by the Sub-groups. The

final text, as adopted by the Third Committee (Document A/777), was read in each of the five languages.

The following comments were made when these texts were read at this meeting:

- Article 1 - The Spanish text gives greater prominence than the French text to a relationship between "endowed with reason and conscience" and the duty of human beings to act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
- Article 2 - The words "such as" are not translated in the Spanish text.
- Article 7 - The Russian text gives "everyone wherever he may be" as the translation of "everywhere" ("en tous lieux")
- Article 12 - The Spanish text (literally translated) says "has the right that his innocence be presumed...."
- Article 14 - The French, Spanish and Chinese texts speak of "a state" whilst the English and Russian texts speak of "each state".
- Article 15 - The Spanish text gives "cualquier pais", as a translation of "other countries".
- Article 17 - The Russian text conveys the idea of majority according to law.
- Article 20 - The word "ideas" is translated in Spanish by "opiniones".
- Article 25 - The word "including", which had been introduced as the result of an amendment, could not be translated into Spanish.
- Article 27 - The word "fundamental" is translated in the Russian text by a word equivalent to "general". The Russian text implies the notion that the education of very young children is referred to.

Although there are a small number of points where the texts do not seem to correspond perfectly in shades of meaning, the group nevertheless expresses the opinion that on the whole these texts are very satisfactory.
