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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 29 March 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia)

later: Mr. VASSYLENKO (Ukraine)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

(agenda item 10) (continued) (E/CN.4/2005/37-41, 42 and Add.1, 43, 44, 45 and Add.1, 47 and Add.1-2, 48 and Add.1 and Corr.1, and Add.2-3, 49-50, 51 and Add.1-4, 52, 63 and 131; E/CN.4/2005/G/7; E/CN.4/2005/NGO/10, 20, 22, 57-60, 80, 94, 97, 110, 115, 128-129, 142, 147-148, 153, 180, 185, 192, 218-219, 230, 243, 248, 256-257, 264, 281-283, 286, 298, 304, 311, 324, 328; E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/20)

1. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Commission to resume its consideration of the item on economic, social and cultural rights and, in particular, the rights to housing, education and health, the Special Rapporteurs for which would introduce their reports.
2. Mr. KOTHARI (Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living) said that the right to an adequate standard of living did not simply refer to a roof and four walls, but instead to a place in which to live in peace and dignity; the realization of that right was intrinsically linked to the security and identity of a person. Given the indivisible and interrelated nature of human rights, issues such as land rights, forced eviction, poverty and the impact of globalization were also relevant. In the fulfilment of his mandate, he had placed particular emphasis on women's right to housing and on the rights of children, indigenous peoples and minorities. In his present reports (E/CN.4/2005/48 and Add.1-3 and E/CN.4/2005/43), he had adopted a thematic approach and focused on homelessness and its causes and impact from a human rights perspective.
3. Urban homelessness currently affected an estimated 20 to 40 million people worldwide. Its causes included a lack of affordable housing, speculation on housing and land for investment purposes, privatization of civic services, unplanned urban migration and the impact of economic globalization. Other important factors were destruction and displacement caused by development projects, ethnic and armed conflicts, natural disasters, an increase in domestic and other forms of violence, the reduction in public housing expenditure and subsidies worldwide and growing urban gentrification. Furthermore, landlessness and homelessness were often closely linked, and the lack of legal provisions guaranteeing communities' right to land and sovereignty over their own natural resources undermined the realization of their right to adequate housing. The growing tendency to criminalize homeless and landless persons made them increasingly vulnerable to acts of violence. Forced evictions continued to occur throughout the world.
4. The support afforded by Governments, United Nations agencies and programmes and other actors during his country visits to Kenya and Brazil in 2004 was commendable, and he had been encouraged by the vibrancy and professionalism of civil society organizations and national institutions and by the concrete impact those visits had had in both countries.
5. The Kenyan Government's efforts to design clear policies in areas previously neglected, such as water, housing and women's right to housing, were praiseworthy. However, the implementation of such policies was hampered by a legacy of corruption and mismanagement of State and local resources, the growth of slums, the lack of access to basic services, and the high HIV/AIDS prevalence. Discrimination against women with respect to land, property and

inheritance and the existence of “land cartels” and illicit land markets must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The integration of a human rights perspective in sectoral policies; a review of existing and planned programmes, policies and legislation so as to orient them towards the most vulnerable segments of society; and the adoption of a comprehensive approach to addressing issues such as forced evictions were crucial to the progressive implementation of the right to adequate housing. In that connection, the commitment of Kenyan civil society organizations and national institutions and their increasingly fruitful cooperation with the Government on housing and land rights issues were encouraging.

6. The current housing deficit in Brazil was cause for grave concern. Despite the Brazilian Government’s commitment to meet the housing needs of its citizens, some 6.6 million Brazilian families were homeless, and one third of homes had no access to sanitation. Homelessness, landlessness and the lack of adequate housing in Brazil were in part a result of the historic discrimination against Brazilians of African descent (Quilombolas) and indigenous peoples and the marginalization of the poor. While the Government’s commitment to addressing those issues was commendable, the focus must be shifted from policy-making and legislative reforms to concrete action aimed at redistributing land and wealth.

7. Addressing the issue of housing in Brazil required enhanced cooperation between federal, State and municipal government agencies. Balancing macroeconomic policies with human rights imperatives and obligations could be achieved, for example, through reducing the budget surplus target, thus releasing funds for the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights. Homelessness in Brazil was on the rise, and the drastic inequality in land ownership denied millions their right to adequate housing. He called on the Brazilian Government to set up a commission to address the issue of agrarian and urban conflicts and forced evictions. He was encouraged by signs that his visit to Brazil had strengthened the ongoing dialogue and cooperation among various sectors of society.

8. Pursuant to Commission resolution 2002/49 on women’s equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing, he had prepared a separate report on women and adequate housing (E/CN.4/2005/43), which addressed both women’s access to housing and related issues. Recurrent critical factors that affected women’s right to adequate housing included discrimination with regard to land, property and inheritance rights, a lack of information on their rights and the lack of access to affordable housing. The study on women and housing (E/CN.4/2003/55) and processes such as regional consultation had generated considerable momentum among civil society groups worldwide.

9. In future, responses to the causes of homelessness must draw upon key principles such as the indivisibility of human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination. Given the magnitude of the problem at a global level, the recognition of land as a human right was of paramount importance. He appealed to the Commission to sanction the holding of an expert seminar to draft human rights guidelines for forced evictions; requested States to take account of the provisions contained in general comments Nos. 4 and 7 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and urged the international community to reach a consensus on establishing a human rights framework for adequate housing. Given the impact of natural disasters on the right to housing, a human rights-based approach in assessment and rehabilitation processes was

crucial. He encouraged States to support the effective implementation of the joint Housing Rights Programme of UN-Habitat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and appealed to the Commission to continue insisting on the adoption of a human rights framework for adequate housing, without which there would be more homelessness and landlessness and growing urban and rural apartheid worldwide.

10. Mr. DA ROCHA PARANHOS (Brazil) thanked the Special Rapporteur for his report, which was an accurate reflection of the difficulties arising in connection with the right to adequate housing in Brazil. His Government had taken a holistic approach to addressing the country's housing deficit. It had incorporated a race and gender perspective into all social policies and was committed to protecting the rights of the Quilombola communities by supporting the preservation of their cultural and ethnic identity and the sustainable development of their region.

11. Nearly 6 million households in Brazil were affected by the housing deficit, 80 per cent of them in urban areas. A lack of planning, land reform and control over the use and occupation of land in past years had exacerbated the problem. Eighty-three per cent of the families that lacked adequate housing had a monthly income of up to three minimum wages. In an attempt to improve access to adequate housing, urbanized land, a healthy environment and safe mobility, the Government had created the Ministry of Cities in 2003. Also, substantial funds had been funnelled into housing and environmental sanitation and existing programmes were increasingly geared towards low-income populations, which were the most seriously affected by housing and infrastructure deficits. The Ministry of Cities had established a programme for national urban development, which contemplated the coordination and integration of investments and programmes in the area of housing and increased participation of civil society.

12. The first National Conference on Cities had been held in October 2003, resulting in the establishment of the National Cities Council and the drafting of the principles and guidelines of the national programme for urban development. The Council comprised both civil society and Federal Government representatives. It was entrusted with drafting policy proposals in the areas of housing, sanitation, transport and urban mobility, urban traffic, territorial planning and urban development to be submitted at the second National Conference on Cities to be held at the end of 2005.

13. The main purpose of the urban development programme was the implementation of the principle of the social function of property enshrined in the Brazilian Constitution. In 2004, a programme had been launched that provided for the allocation of interest-free loans to low-income families to facilitate the acquisition of land and building materials. The National Urbanization, Regularization and Integration of Precarious Settlements Programme contemplated the use of federal budget resources for the urbanization of precarious settlements and would benefit an estimated 6.6 million people. The programme encompassed a wide range of measures designed to ensure an adequate standard of living for persons living in such dwellings.

14. In order to improve access to adequate housing in rural areas, the Government had launched a national land reform plan that envisaged the settlement of 400,000 families by the end of 2006. Another 130,000 families would receive assistance through the national land credit programme aimed, inter alia, at the recuperation of existing settlements, the registration and regularization of land, job creation and a new model of settlement that would take into

consideration economic feasibility, productive integration, sustainable territorial development, access to public services, social participation and administrative decentralization. In addition to the distribution of land to 530,000 families, the programme envisaged the regularization of lands already occupied by 500,000 families. As well as the dispossession of large areas of land for land reform, the national programme for land credit provided for the allocation of resources for land purchases and included measures to strengthen the productive structures of families. The programme targeted farmers living in the poor semi-arid north-western region of Brazil, young farmers between the ages of 18 and 24 and well-established farmers seeking to invest and expand their property.

15. With respect to the specific situation of the municipality of Alcântara, an inter-ministerial executive group had been established in 2004 to devise and implement measures to reconcile sustainable development and respect for the ethnic, social and cultural specificities of the local Quilombola communities and the adequate development of the Brazilian Space Programme. The group engaged in consultations with the local Quilombola community to devise appropriate measures for the sustainable development of the region.

16. Mr. OWADE (Kenya) said that his Government firmly believed in the responsibility of national Governments and the international community to promote and protect both civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. Thus, it had engaged in a constructive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing and extended maximum cooperation during his visit. The Special Rapporteur's in-depth analysis of the situation of housing in Kenya had proved a useful instrument in policy-making. The formulation of comprehensive housing legislation to regulate the sector was currently under way; both existing and new housing policies contained clear implementation strategies. The slum-upgrading project had been officially launched in October 2004.

17. The Government had initiated a process of generating indicators and statistics for monitoring the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Both the envisaged Integrated Household Budget Survey and the 2003 Demographic and Health Survey aimed at generating data that could be used for that purpose.

18. Kenyan legislation protected women's right to property and housing. Discriminatory customary practices were superseded by the Constitution and other domestic legislation. Activities were undertaken to raise women's awareness of their own rights, and a special complaints mechanism had been set up enabling women to seek redress for any violations.

19. He pointed out that the term "indigenous people" was not applicable to populations in Kenya; all communities of African descent were indigenous. It would thus be preferable to refer to the Ogiek and Kieni peoples, for example, as communities which originally lived in forests. Efforts were being made to halt logging activities, which had been one of the issues of concern for those communities, in order to conserve the water catchments area.

20. The Kenyan Government would continue its efforts to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing through land policy formulation, constitutional review and the implementation of relevant sectoral policies. A systematic approach encompassing short-, medium- and long-term measures was important. He appealed to the Special Rapporteur, the Commission and other actors to support his Government's efforts.

21. Ms. PÉREZ ÁLVAREZ (Cuba) asked whether the Special Rapporteur intended to further examine the links between increases in income, the decline in housing subsidies and the gentrification of social housing estates and poverty and homelessness around the world. She would welcome information on progress and new developments in regard to the right to water.
22. Mr. CERDA (Argentina) asked the Special Rapporteur to further elaborate the model provisions protecting women's rights to housing and domestic violence legislation recommended in his report (E/CN.4/2005/43).
23. Ms. SOSA (Mexico) asked the Special Rapporteur to comment on further measures needed to ensure the effective integration of a gender perspective into policy-making in the area of housing.
24. Mr. BERNIS (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, asked whether the support provided by Governments was sufficient to enable the Special Rapporteur to carry out his mandate effectively and whether the mandate should be extended to include other issues related to the right to adequate housing. He also wished to know what measures could be taken to combat the practice of forced evictions.
25. Mr. KOTHARI (Special Rapporteur on adequate housing) said that the Governments of both Brazil and Kenya had shown their commitment and support for his mission. Brazil's near complete integration of international human rights provisions in domestic legislation, and in particular the identification of the social function of property, was praiseworthy.
26. He was pleased with the progress made in Kenya since his visit. However, he urged the Government to take concrete action to implement legal and policy provisions on women's rights to housing, land and property. The gap between policy commitments and policy implementation was a global phenomenon, and he appealed to all Governments to work towards overcoming that problem. Kenya had identified a great number of indicators for the MDGs, including extensive poverty mapping, and he encouraged other countries to follow suit.
27. Part of his work had consisted in examining the links between the increase in income and economic growth and the non-realization of housing and land rights worldwide. Economic growth itself did not equate to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. The increasing concentration of wealth in few hands and in particular areas in cities had resulted in the growing phenomenon of both rural and urban apartheid. The vast majority of violations of the right to housing were related to discrimination, and he intended to further explore that connection. While many Governments and civil society organizations placed increasing emphasis on the human right to water, no global consensus had been reached thus far. International financial institutions, aid agencies and other actors continued to undermine such a consensus, and he appealed to the Commission to work towards bridging the gap.
28. Modern norms on domestic violence should contain far-reaching provisions for the protection of victims' right to adequate housing. Concurrently, Governments must observe existing international standards in the context of resettlements, forced evictions and policy-making.

29. He had received considerable support from OHCHR and Governments during his missions. Nevertheless, it was equally important that Governments should promote the institutional mechanisms set up within the United Nations system, including the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Housing Rights Programme. Governments were also called upon to support the drafting of human rights guidelines on forced evictions.

30. Mr. MUÑOZ VILLALOBOS (Special Rapporteur on the right to education), introducing his report (E/CN.4/2005/50), said that he was motivated by a concern to move education closer to human rights, since knowledge devoid of respect for human rights was of little value.

31. In many countries, parents still had to pay school fees. In fact it was the State's duty to provide free primary tuition, and in countries where it had done so, millions of boys and girls had been able to realize their right to education. In highly indebted countries, the World Bank should advocate the conversion of public debt into a financing facility for education which developed human skills.

32. While States had affirmed the indivisibility of human rights, economic, social and cultural rights had sometimes been given less legal protection than civil and political rights. Hence there was an urgent need to guarantee the justiciability of the right to education at the national and international levels.

33. Since the completion of his report, he had become aware of the severe discrimination suffered by the Dalits. He therefore intended to explore caste-based discrimination in the future and to identify ways of overcoming it. Given that other groups who experienced particular difficulty in gaining access to high-quality education were pregnant girls, teenage mothers, migrants and persons with disabilities, it would be necessary to study the impact of educational policies on classroom reality and to promote changes in school procedures if education were to be moved closer to human rights.

34. Lastly, he drew attention to the sections of his report dealing with security and safety in schools and to his recommendations to international agencies that they focus more on the right to education in emergency situations. He trusted that all States would strive to ensure that the human right to education was viewed as both a starting-point and an end of policies and programmes.

35. Ms. PÉREZ ÁLVAREZ (Cuba) asked whether the Special Rapporteur intended to study international and bilateral cooperation initiatives to reduce illiteracy. What factual information would be yielded by human-rights-based indicators? Would he give national Governments a chance to put forward their ideas on the subject? How did he intend to interact with the experts from the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in order to support the latter's endeavours to combat illiteracy?

36. Mr. CERDA (Argentina) stated that the very serious problem of violence in schools was not necessarily associated with national disasters or armed conflicts. For that reason, it was to be hoped that the Special Rapporteur would look into ways of preventing it in future reports. His Government supported the justiciability of the right to education.

37. Mr. VARELA QUIROS (Costa Rica) said that education was a social investment and not a cost, since a less ignorant population would find it easier to realize other rights and to develop. Hence endeavours should be made to give effect to the right to education.

38. Education meant more than basic literacy and should be regarded as a complete process. Good-quality education should be equally open to girls and boys, to migrants, whose specific needs had to be investigated, and indeed to all elements of society. The justiciability of the right to high-quality education should be discussed in greater depth.

39. Mr. BERNIS (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, enquired how the Special Rapporteur would select factors for inclusion in the indicators regarding the right to education. What measures could be adopted to meet the educational needs of persons with disabilities?

40. Mr. SHEIKH (Pakistan) said that the development of human-rights-based indicators to monitor progress towards the achievement of the right to education was particularly interesting, and more details on the subject would therefore be welcome. Perhaps in his next report, the Special Rapporteur could provide some answers to the important issues raised in paragraph 68 of his current report, because they had implications for other human rights mechanisms.

41. Respect for cultural and religious diversity was crucial in a learning context. For that reason, the cultural and religious identity of the pupil or student should be preserved. As practices in some parts of the world encroached upon that right, the next report should outline best practices and include some recommendations or guidelines in that connection.

42. Mr. SAHA (India) expressed surprise about the Special Rapporteur's comments regarding the Dalits, because his Government had gone to extraordinary lengths to reduce caste-based discrimination. Indeed it had introduced affirmative action to improve the lot of those sections of society who had suffered from discrimination in that past, so that they could enjoy the fruits of democracy and economic growth. Social discrimination did not, however, fall within the remit of the Special Rapporteur. Social practices and the right to education were two separate matters. As far as the right to education was concerned, his Government did not discriminate against any group and had enshrined the right to education for all in recent laws.

43. Mr. MUÑOZ VILLALOBOS (Special Rapporteur on the right to education), replying to the observations made by previous speakers, said that combating illiteracy was central to gaining access to the right to education. He had paid particular attention to the right to education of children and young people.

44. Indicators could be helpful in that they shed light on the real situation and made it possible to frame policies to counter human rights violations. On the other hand, they were always of a very general nature and did not reveal specific problems in individual communities. His main difficulty lay in deciding how to develop indicators of the right to education which would complement educational indicators, those being two completely different things. For that reason, he would seek the advice of UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the development of a series of indicators pointing to discrimination in access to education as well as indicators of the exercise of citizenship and participation in the classroom, which would provide a much more accurate picture of the situation of pupils and teachers in educational systems.

45. The comments of the representative of Argentina had brought home the fact that violence in schools could occur in a variety of circumstances and not just in emergency situations. Moreover, the obstacles which girls encountered in gaining access to education in many parts of the world could be regarded as an emergency. By thus widening the notion of an emergency it might be possible to find more adequate answers to worldwide problems.

46. In response to the comments by the representative of Costa Rica, he announced his intention to work out guidelines for realizing the right to education of girls and teenage mothers, to identify the actual needs of migrants and to outline a type of education permitting active, responsible, proactive citizenship in favour of human rights.

47. He would endeavour to assess the impact of national legislation on the exercise of the right to education by persons with disabilities by comparing the situation in various parts of the world. He had taken note of the comments made by the representative of Pakistan and would examine the question of respect for religious diversity in schools. While discrimination against Dalits probably stemmed more from social practices, it undoubtedly had its roots in institutional attitudes. The Indian authorities had certainly made great efforts to deal with such discrimination, and he therefore looked forward to continued dialogue with them on that subject in the future.

48. Mr. HUNT (Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health), introducing his report (E/CN.4/2005/51 and Add.1-4), said that since the right to health was complex and extensive, he had adopted two basic approaches to his work: firstly, the identification of particular elements of the right to health, such as sexual and reproductive health rights, in order that, over time, a complete picture of the right to health could be established, including the relevance of that right to particular groups; and secondly, the analysis of each element of the right to health in terms of a common analytical framework, including aspects such as freedoms, entitlements, non-discrimination and equality, participation, international assistance and cooperation, monitoring and accountability. He hoped that, with time, that analytical framework would be improved and refined, and that it would become an accepted way of understanding such a complex human right.

49. In his report, he had applied that analytical approach to the right to health of persons with mental disabilities, because their health-care and support needs were among the most neglected in the world. Although mental and behavioural disorders accounted for approximately 12 per cent of the global burden of disease, the mental health budget of most countries was less than 1 per cent of their total health expenditure. Over 40 per cent of countries had no mental health policy, and over 90 per cent had no mental health policy that included children and adolescents. Where mental health-care and support services were available, users were particularly vulnerable to violations of their human rights, especially in segregated service systems, such as psychiatric hospitals, orphanages, prisons and institutions for people with intellectual disabilities. He had received numerous accounts of the long-term, inappropriate institutionalization of persons with mental disabilities in psychiatric hospitals and other

institutions where they had been subjected to human rights abuses, including rape and other sexual abuse by other patients and staff, forced sterilizations, being chained to soiled beds for long periods and the administration of treatment without informed consent. In one particular European country in 2004, 15 patients had died of malnutrition and hypothermia in a psychiatric hospital. In many cases, people with severe mental disabilities were imprisoned, rather than referred to the appropriate mental health-care and support services. Women with mental disabilities were particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. Ethnic and racial minorities often faced discrimination in access to medical health-care and support services. Despite acute mental health-care needs, indigenous peoples were often ignored.

50. The stigmatization of various mental conditions often led to discrimination. Those affected were often denied equal opportunities to a wide range of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Although the World Health Organization (WHO) had recommended that mental health services be based in the community and integrated as far as possible into general health services, in many countries mental health care was predominantly centralized in large psychiatric hospitals with few or no care and support services available in the community. The lack of such services and social housing often left persons with mental disabilities sleeping rough on the streets.

51. Many people with mental disabilities had, however, proved that they could live full and meaningful lives in the community. People who had once been considered incapable of making decisions for themselves had shattered stereotypes by showing that they were capable of living independently, provided they had appropriate legal protection and support. Even with limited resources, there was a great deal that countries could do to improve the situation of persons with mental disabilities, such as including the recognition, care and treatment of such disabilities in training curricula for all health personnel, promoting public campaigns against stigma and discrimination of persons with mental disabilities, supporting the formation of civil society groups that were representative of mental health-care users and their families, formulating modern policies and programmes on mental health, and establishing an independent system of monitoring and accountability for those with mental disabilities. The report also addressed the particular vulnerabilities and needs of those with intellectual disabilities, such as Down's syndrome; the right to community integration; and the issue of informed consent, which needed urgent reconsideration.

52. He had submitted three country mission reports to the Commission, on Mozambique, Peru and Romania. He thanked the Governments of those countries for having extended invitations to him, and for their full cooperation during his visits. The three countries had all recently developed a number of excellent health policies, but in some cases, implementation still lagged. The right to health required accessible and transparent monitoring and accountability arrangements, in order to narrow the gap between policies and practice. Active and informed community participation in the health sector was also necessary. Corruption could not survive if effective monitoring, accountability and community participation were being carried out in the health sector. By definition, a policy based on the right to health was also an anti-corruption policy.

53. After giving a brief summary of the country mission reports, he said that in 2003 the Commission had requested him to carry out an analysis of neglected diseases. He had received an invitation from the Government of Uganda to undertake a country mission, specifically on

that subject. The mission, during which he had been accompanied by a WHO expert on neglected diseases, had enabled him to deepen his understanding of the problem. The mission had been a good example of cooperation between a Government, a United Nations specialized agency, and a Special Rapporteur, in response to a request from the Commission. That, he believed, was exactly how the United Nations system should work.

54. Mr. DA CONCEIÇÃO (Observer for Mozambique) said that his Government had welcomed the visit of the Special Rapporteur as a platform to seek an international opinion on the real impact of the country's on-going efforts in respect of economic and social development, to which the full enjoyment of the right to health was closely related. The Government and other related stakeholders had collaborated fully with the Special Rapporteur during his mission, thus allowing him to understand the real dimension of health problems in the country, and attesting to the Government's commitment to working closely with the international community. Mozambique was a State party to a number of important international human rights instruments, and the issue of human rights was at the heart of the Government's priorities. Mozambique welcomed the Special Rapporteur's report and agreed with his findings, in particular his recommendations regarding the responsibility of the international community in assisting the country in fulfilling its human rights obligations, and the need for all bilateral and multilateral cooperation partners to develop an integrated and coordinated approach in the health sector.

55. The Government believed that the main obstacles to the realization of health-related rights in Mozambique were rooted in poverty. The Government was committed to poverty eradication, but was aware that a monumental task lay before it, and that the full realization of its aspirations remained a distant target. In order to guarantee the right to health, critical issues related to the global aspects of economic, social and cultural development must be addressed. Provided that the current development trends could be further improved, the Government believed that within the following five years it could provide minimum conditions of a decent life for the population, by tackling certain priorities: the eradication of absolute poverty and the eradication of hunger; the provision of primary education for all; the promotion of gender equality; the reduction of infant mortality and improvement of maternal health care; the increase in efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other endemic diseases; the regulation of the corruption and bureaucracy that could undermine the ethics of transparency and good governance; and the promotion of sustainable and comprehensive economic growth.

56. The Government had noted the Special Rapporteur's recommendations, including his request that it redouble its efforts to improve the quality of goods and health services provided, particularly in rural areas. The Government also prioritized economic and social development of rural areas. Women's issues would be addressed, and the Government sought to ensure that women enjoyed equal opportunities and rights and improved education, and that their role as the educators of future generations was strengthened. The Special Rapporteur's recommendation on establishing national human rights institutions in Mozambique underestimated the outstanding progress that the country had made in that field. Civil society organizations for the promotion and protection of human rights were represented all over the country, and addressed issues such as the right to health and other human rights that were decisive for health, including the right to education and the right to drinking water and sanitation.

57. The Government of Mozambique attached great importance to the report of the Special Rapporteur, which constituted a reference document for the international community at large and the Commission in particular. His delegation was confident that the international community would respond generously to the recommendations contained in the report, and would recognize Mozambique's efforts to respond to the challenges it faced, in spite of its limited resources. The Government was committed to cooperating with the Commission and its mechanisms.

58. Mr. NEYRA SÁNCHEZ (Peru) said that the independent, rigorous and constructive approach adopted by the Special Rapporteur during his visit to Peru in June 2004 was a fine example of how the Commission's special procedures should work. His valuable recommendations had been carefully studied and were currently being implemented.

59. The Peruvian Government was aware of the need to give priority to the formulation and implementation of an integrated health policy for the country's poorest and most vulnerable groups. Its National Poverty Eradication Plan contained specific commitments to health care involving civil society. The National Crusade for Civic Rights and Responsibilities in the Area of Health, launched in October 2004, was designed to forge a national consensus on health policies through a participatory and decentralized process. A pilot plan had been initiated in the Ayacucho region, one of Peru's most depressed areas, and another initiative among Lima's schoolchildren had resulted in the production of more than 60,000 health maps that were currently being analysed. People without access to formal education were informed of the right to health through theatrical productions. A National Health Map would be available by October 2005.

60. The Ministry of Health had established a Functional Technical Unit for Human Rights, Gender Equity and Intercultural Affairs to develop technical and normative guidelines for health policies.

61. National health strategies had been formulated for sexual and reproductive health, and the prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. A national health strategy in that area for the period 2004-2006 was currently being implemented, one of its aims being to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality rates.

62. The Ministry of Health was acting on the Special Rapporteur's recommendations regarding the funding of the Health Reparations Plan proposed by Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2003 for people affected by political violence, the protection of the human rights of people with mental disabilities and the improvement of mental health services. In that connection, it was implementing a National Strategy for Mental Health and a Culture of Peace and had set up a Special Commission to protect the rights of people with mental disabilities.

63. To address the problem of elevated blood lead levels recorded in Peru's main port of Callao, companies with warehouses containing lead concentrates were being adapted or relocated, and educational and training programmes had been developed for restaurant managers, teachers, schoolchildren and other vulnerable groups.

64. The negotiations aimed at the conclusion of a free trade agreement with the United States were being conducted in a transparent manner involving all relevant parties. The Ministry of Health and civil society were particularly active in ensuring access to drugs and public health care. The Ministry of Health had issued a clear-cut opinion regarding intellectual property rights with regard to drugs, a position that had recently been acknowledged by the Pan American Health Organization.

65. Mr. COSTEA (Romania) said that the Romanian authorities had engaged in a useful dialogue with the Special Rapporteur, whose recommendations were being considered carefully. They coincided with the Government's vision of the future direction of the country's health programmes.

66. Medical care for persons suffering from tuberculosis was free of charge for the entire population. Under the National Programme for Tuberculosis Control, persons suffering or suspected of suffering from the disease could attend specialist clinics without prior referral by a family physician.

67. He believed that Romania's national experience in Roma-related issues could be of interest to other countries. The four goals of the Ten-Year Action Plan for Roma Integration (2005-2015) were to implement national health programmes in all Roma communities; to guarantee 100 per cent access of Roma communities to primary medical and pharmaceutical services, with special emphasis on disadvantaged areas; to promote intercultural education among all categories of medical personnel; and to facilitate health insurance coverage for Roma who did not meet current legislative criteria owing to, for instance, lack of identity documents.

68. Ms. VERRIER-FRECHETTE (Canada) expressed appreciation of the Special Rapporteur's continued efforts to examine sexual health and reproductive health issues, and to consider ways in which disability-based stigma compounded discrimination on other grounds such as gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

69. The consent-to-treatment issues raised by the Special Rapporteur were particularly important in the context of mental disabilities but also applied to a wide range of issues related to the right to health. She asked whether he intended to consider best practices related to the full range of informed-consent issues for children, adolescents, women and men.

70. Mr. BERNIS (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, asked whether the Special Rapporteur was participating in the negotiations under way at United Nations Headquarters on a draft International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities and, if so, what recommendations he had made regarding its content.

71. With regard to the need to ensure that persons with mental disabilities participated in decisions regarding their medical treatment and other health services, he asked the Special Rapporteur to specify the relationship between their right to participation and the role of family members and guardians.

72. Mr. CERDA (Argentina), noting that the Special Rapporteur had stressed in his report (E/CN.4/2005/51, para. 70) the importance of independent and effective monitoring arrangements in the area of mental disability, asked whether he was referring to an ombudsman or some other type of institution.

73. In paragraph 74, he had recommended that the human rights treaty bodies be encouraged to focus more on mental disability issues in their discussions with States parties, concluding observations, and general comments or recommendations. However, they were not universal bodies and their work needed to be supplemented by the provisions of the future convention. Moreover, in paragraphs 91 and 92 he had referred to widespread discrimination and stigmatization and the need to ensure dignity, autonomy and integration into society. Those aspects should also be covered by the draft convention, especially if it were to serve as a preventive tool.

74. Ms. AJAMAY (Observer for Norway) expressed appreciation of the Special Rapporteur's work on the rights of persons with mental disabilities, who were among the most vulnerable to human rights violations. She encouraged him to review existing and suggested benchmarks aimed at ensuring the realization of the right to health for all.

75. Norway, which was participating in the negotiations on the draft convention, would be interested in hearing how the Special Rapporteur felt his extensive work might be fed into that process.

76. Ms. PÉREZ ÁLVAREZ (Cuba), noting that the Special Rapporteur was working on an analysis of the impact of poverty on the right to health and on the human rights dimensions of neglected diseases, asked whether he had considered studying, in that context, the regional and international South-South cooperation agreements that had had a positive impact on the right to health.

77. In November 2004 the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had studied a draft general comment on article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which addressed, inter alia, the issue of intellectual property rights. What were the Special Rapporteur's views on the need, in the context of the draft general comment, to ensure that essential drugs for the control of HIV/AIDS were not subject to patents?

78. Mr. OBEMBO (Congo) asked whether the Special Rapporteur had identified factors other than the debt burden that constituted a particularly severe obstacle to enjoyment of the right to health in developing countries.

79. Mr. THAPA (Nepal), referring to document E/CN.4/2005/51/Add.1, in which the Special Rapporteur had referred to an appeal regarding the Blue Diamond Society of Nepal, said that all the cases mentioned were being actively investigated by the authorities with a view to resolving the issue.

80. Mr. HUNT (Special Rapporteur on the right to health) said he had taken careful note of the comments by the delegations of Mozambique, Peru and Romania. He remained at the disposal of the authorities of all three States if they wished to continue the dialogue.

81. In response to the representative of Canada, he confirmed that he intended to monitor the issue of informed consent, not only in respect of people with mental disabilities, but also more broadly. He was frequently confronted with the issue in relation, for instance, to forced sterilization and forced feeding of prisoners, and was constantly on the lookout for good practices that might assist States parties.

82. In reply to the observer for Luxembourg, he said that, although he would like to be involved in the drafting of the convention, he had to date been unable to obtain the resources that would be needed to engage in a considered and measured way. However, he was in touch with the Special Rapporteur on disability, who was closely engaged in monitoring the negotiations. The two fundamental points to be emphasized in that regard were that there should be no backsliding on existing standards and that there should be strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

83. With regard to the need to balance the right to participation of people with mental disabilities with the rights of their family members and guardians, he said that persons with disabilities were extremely vulnerable in some cases to the actions of their families and guardians. The right to health and other human rights could buttress their autonomy and give them scope to express themselves. Although human rights did not provide magic answers, they could reduce the incidence of abuse by well-intentioned third parties.

84. In response to the representative of Argentina, he reiterated the critical importance of reinforcing accountability and monitoring in all areas, be it poverty reduction, trade or mental disability, that had a bearing on the enjoyment of human rights. At the national level, that role was performed by human rights institutions and at the international level by the treaty bodies.

85. Owing to time constraints, he was unable to respond in public to the other speakers but he would deal with their questions on an informal basis.

86. Mr. VASSYLENKO (Ukraine) said that since all human rights were interrelated, interdependent and indivisible, the promotion of civil and political rights must go hand in hand with efforts to give effect to the rights to an adequate standard of living, health, food and education. States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should ensure the full observance of all those rights, whose importance could not be overstated. The poverty and exclusion which lay behind many security threats and which existed even in the most prosperous economies were rooted in a lack of social, economic and cultural rights.

87. While the methods of protecting certain rights could differ, as could the capacity of States to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights, such disparities did not justify dissimilar levels of commitment to the protection of all human rights. His Government was striving to strengthen the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights and it supported the elaboration of a draft protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on an optional communications procedure for individuals or groups claiming to be victims of violations of the rights embodied in the Covenant.

88. It was vital to help countries with economies in transition to join the global economic process by opening up international markets to their products, ensuring transparency and giving them a say in international economic decisions.

89. The World Programme for Human Rights Education was important as a means of promoting and protecting civil, political, social and cultural rights and raising awareness of human rights. Universally recognized human rights embodied the international consensus on the minimum conditions required to secure a decent life for every human being. All members of the international community should therefore engage in a determined and cooperative effort to guarantee respect for those rights.

90. Mr. AYALOGU (Nigeria) said that the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights gave real meaning to human rights per se, since it permitted a quality of life consonant with human dignity. The international community should pay as much attention to economic, social and cultural rights as it did to civil and political rights, because they were of equal importance.

91. The mandate of the open-ended working group on an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should be supported. The working group should carefully evaluate needs and requirements for new normative instruments, procedures and mechanisms.

92. The achievement of all the major objectives connected with economic, social and cultural rights would demand concerted action at the national and international levels. It would likewise be greatly furthered by international cooperation in order to ensure that all countries reached the minimum level of development recommended in various forums and by developed countries' fulfilment of their pledges in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

93. His Government had done much to enhance the quality of life of all Nigerians by upgrading the water supply and infrastructure and by initiating agricultural programmes and poverty reduction schemes. It had also spent almost US\$ 20 billion on the petrochemical sector in an effort to revive the economy and create jobs. It was determined to pursue its endeavours to improve the welfare of its citizens.

94. Mr. GUNARATNA (Sri Lanka) said that the current discussion on economic, social and cultural rights was particularly significant in the light of the forthcoming review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration to be held in New York. His Government, with assistance from UNDP, was currently publishing its official report on Sri Lanka's progress towards attaining the MDGs. Sri Lanka had been committed to development since its independence. Successive Governments had implemented policies of free and compulsory education, and free health care such as preventive immunization, which had had a positive effect on poverty alleviation. Those measures had enabled Sri Lanka, a small developing country, to achieve a relatively high standard of human development, and the country was on track to meet the MDGs.

95. The tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004 had represented a major setback to development in the affected coastal regions. The Government, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, was taking the necessary measures to address the crisis, while remaining focused on the need to safeguard the progress towards achieving the MDGs. The country's health infrastructure had ensured that no deaths had occurred due to system failures, and the predictions of a possible second wave of epidemics and famine had not been borne out. At the outset of the crisis there had been an outpouring of local support for the victims, without any form of

discrimination, and there had been an unprecedented response to the appeal for international assistance, for which the Government was very grateful. It had been possible to mobilize government machinery, including in the north and east of the country, owing to the prevailing ceasefire with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Millions of dollars' worth of medicine and relief supplies had been sent to the north and east, and had been acknowledged by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), both of which had been present in those areas since the time of the conflict. Details of all relief supplies that had been sent to the north and east were available on the web site of the Ministry of Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. Humanitarian concern had propelled the effort to help every citizen affected by the tsunami, irrespective of any other considerations.

96. Thanks to joint efforts, it had been possible to make the transition from the emergency stage to reconstruction and rehabilitation within a period of three months. The Government had already made arrangements for start-up allowances and dry rations to meet the essential needs of tsunami-affected families. Following the advice of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the coastal conservation authorities, a 100-metre coast conservation reserve had been marked and the Government had offered to build and provide, free of charge, new houses for tsunami victims who had previously lived within that area. The Urban Development Authority had signed 100 memorandums of understanding with donors to build 30,000 houses to relocate those victims. A master plan for long-term reconstruction had been formulated, and individual projects had been allocated to donors. Memorandums of understanding for the rebuilding of schools had been handed over to donors, and the majority had already begun construction.

97. Since January 2005, the Government and LTTE had been engaged in discussions on the establishment of a working arrangement to effectively and equitably allocate and implement post-tsunami aid, and a memorandum of understanding between the two parties was under consideration, in order to bring those discussions to an early conclusion. The Government did not underestimate the challenges ahead. It recognized that, while the needs of the tsunami victims should be met, consideration must also be given to their unaffected neighbours, in order to avoid creating social inequities. A healthy partnership must also be established with the NGOs that wished to provide assistance, in keeping with the Government's policy of transparency and accountability in project implementation and distribution of donor funds. The Government had been particularly vigilant in the protection of human rights during the tsunami crisis, which had posed many challenges. Mobile services were provided in tsunami-affected areas to enable victims to obtain legal documentation, such as birth certificates, national identity cards, marriage certificates, deeds to property, and legal advice and help, including on protection issues regarding women and children in the camps.

98. Three years of peace in Sri Lanka had contributed to the progressive realization of the economic, social and cultural rights of citizens, particularly in the north and east of the country. The signing of the ceasefire agreement in February 2002 had enabled the Jaffna-Colombo highway to be reopened, and had permitted the free movement of people and goods after many years. There had also been significant growth in agricultural and trading activities. His delegation noted with appreciation the increased attention paid by the development community

to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly since in the past, the development community and the human rights community had operated separately from each other. The Government of Sri Lanka was currently finalizing its second periodic report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

99. Ms. KORUNOVA (Russian Federation) said that the 10-year review of the implementation of the decisions of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development had recently taken place in New York. Those who had participated in the high-level discussion had been almost unanimous in their belief that the difficult socio-economic situation in many developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs), required decisive and complex action on the part of the international community. Collaborative strength was required to overcome threats such as famine, poverty, epidemics, environmental degradation and the increasing social gap between people in different regions of the world. The Russian Federation welcomed the High Commissioner's intention to pay particular attention to the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights, and their inextricable link with civil and political rights, an approach that could reduce social and economic tensions that could lead to conflict situations and threats to life and security.

100. The Russian delegation welcomed the report of the Independent expert on the effects of structural adjustment policies and foreign debt on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights (E/CN.4/2005/42). The Russian Federation was successfully dealing with the problem of foreign debt, using credit provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Russia was continuing to increase its contribution to international aid for development, particularly in respect of debt reduction for LDCs. Over the previous three years, Russia had written off developing-country debts to the sum of over US\$ 14 billion, and had contributed US\$ 10 million to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. The Russian Federation intended to implement the decisions of the World Conference on Human Rights, which had called on the international community to make efforts to reduce the burden of external debt on developing countries, with a view to strengthening their Governments' efforts to guarantee the full provision of economic, social and cultural rights.

101. Russia was also taking concrete measures to increase its donor potential. The country was currently providing financial support for the implementation of several international development initiatives, and planned to give particular assistance to African countries. The Russian Federation currently had trade partnerships with 50 African countries, including 29 LDCs, goods from which could be imported into the country tax-free.

102. Russia supported the idea of drafting an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. That Covenant and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights formed the cornerstone of the complex system of fundamental rights and freedoms. The drafting of an optional protocol would bring those two categories of rights, which were different sides of the same issue, closer together. It was clear that without the adequate realization of economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights could not be fully guaranteed. Russia called on all interested States and regional groups to demonstrate their political commitment and come to a consensus on the draft optional protocol, in order to eliminate the imbalances in the international human rights protection system.

103. Ms. MTSHALI (South Africa) said that her delegation considered it unfortunate that civil and political rights had historically tended to receive priority over economic, social and cultural rights, which had fostered the misguided belief in some quarters that only the former were justiciable. Such a premise was contrary to the principle that all human rights were indivisible, interdependent, interrelated and universal. Although a consensus had not yet been reached on the nature of an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the acknowledgement of the justiciability of those rights would consolidate their implementation. South Africa strongly believed in the mutually strengthening nature of civil and political rights on one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other. The South African Constitution provided for the equal enjoyment of both of those sets of rights. During the country's first decade of freedom, the Government had established a development agenda that recognized the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights, and aimed to address the legacy of apartheid. The progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights was an unavoidable development imperative for rectifying the inequities and racially skewed economy that South Africa had inherited in 1994. It had been necessary to reorder the Government's budget priorities and aim the distribution of resources at social spending and improving the situation of the historically disadvantaged majority in South Africa. Significant progress had been made in ensuring socio-economic delivery in areas such as housing, health, basic education and access to clean water and electricity. Implementation of economic, social and cultural rights, of which the majority of the population had been deprived under the apartheid regime, had loosened the grip of poverty, restored human dignity and given people a previously unknown sense of belonging to the country. As South Africa entered its second decade of democracy, the Government had pledged to continue its efforts to combat poverty and underdevelopment, and make all those who lived in the country united in their diversity.

104. Mr. Vassilenko (Ukraine) took the Chair.

105. Mr. ANSHOR (Indonesia) said that although in the past, economic, social and cultural rights had been given less attention than civil and political rights, their fundamental nature could not be contested. Indonesia believed that the two sets of rights deserved the same treatment, and their advancement, although progressive, was of the utmost importance to the Government. States must take positive action to ensure the protection of those rights. The protection and guarantee of economic, social and cultural rights were enshrined in Indonesia's Constitution, and legislative measures for their protection and realization had been undertaken.

106. The Indonesian Government attached particular importance to education, which it considered to be a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. The Government agreed with the comments of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education and supported the view that a global consensus was needed on the attainment of the MDGs, in particular MDGs 2 and 3. The Government had implemented a series of measures aimed at incorporating human rights principles more firmly into national development policies, in order to progressively advance the right to education. A percentage of government resources and local government budgets had been allocated to ensure access to education at the grass-roots level. The law on the national education system had been formulated in accordance with human rights standards, and provided for free education for the poor as part of the country's compulsory nine-year education programme. The President had recently announced a plan to

provide free health care. The Government was aware of the scale of that task, and of the budgetary implications, but remained committed to improving the existing system to the benefit of the population. In 1998, a social programme had been established to facilitate access to free medication and health care.

107. International economic and technical assistance and cooperation were paramount in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, and were especially important in addressing issues such as extreme poverty, which could, in some cases, amount to a threat to international security. Concerted international efforts should therefore be actively promoted. His delegation agreed with the points raised in the report of the Independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty (E/CN.4/2004/49), particularly the idea that the international community could play a significant role in helping poorer countries enhance their output and employment. International cooperation in the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights had been clearly demonstrated in the international solidarity extended to the countries affected by the recent tsunami disaster. Generous contributions and assistance including funds, logistical resources, food, medicines and emergency shelter had come from many countries. Such unprecedented international solidarity was a clear manifestation of the fundamental principle of international cooperation in the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly in emergency situations. Indonesia hoped that such cooperation could also be demonstrated in other situations.

108. Mr. DAHAB MOHAMED (Sudan) said that the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing had referred in his report (E/CN.4/2005/48/Add.1) to 22 Sudanese nationals at the Kalma refugee camp in Darfur who had been arrested following the Government's attempts to return them by force to their villages. On the other hand, the report on the situation of human rights in the Darfur region of the Sudan (E/CN.4/2005/3) stated in paragraph 74 that the Government appeared to be preventing people from returning to their homes. Hence, the Sudanese authorities were being blamed by one Special Rapporteur for returning people to their homes and by the other for preventing them from returning to their homes. He drew attention to the danger of using such reports as the basis for resolutions by bodies such as the Commission.

109. The joint communiqué issued by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan in the context of the Joint Implementation Mechanism (JIM) on their joint visit to Darfur in November 2004 had commended the government authorities in southern Darfur on the concrete steps they had taken to achieve voluntary return, reconciliation and confidence-building.

110. He agreed with the Special Rapporteur on toxic waste that international environmental treaties tended to focus on technical issues but that the Commission should examine the adverse effect on the full range of existing human rights of illicit movements of hazardous products in order to ensure that the States and companies responsible for human rights violations did not enjoy impunity.

111. The debt burden prevented developing countries, especially LDCs, from fulfilling their obligation to fight poverty and diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. It also made them more vulnerable to internal conflict.

112. He stressed that unilateral coercive measures did not contribute to the strengthening of human rights or to international peace and security.

113. Lastly, he noted that multiculturalism played a vital role in ensuring peaceful coexistence. The comprehensive peace agreement signed by the Sudan in January 2005 was based on the principle of national unity in a multicultural society.

114. Mr. XIA Jingge (China) said that globalization had presented developing countries with formidable challenges, particularly the danger of being further marginalized. Poverty and foreign debt had increased while repayment ability had diminished, the environment continued to deteriorate, and efforts to improve health care and housing were seriously hampered. He hoped that at the September 2005 summit to review progress towards implementing the MDGs the international community would heed calls for attaching greater importance to economic, social and cultural rights and adopt new measures to achieve balanced global development.

115. To realize the right to employment, the Chinese Government had strongly promoted vocational training to enhance the skills and qualifications of its workforce. In 2004 China had created 9.8 million new jobs in urban areas, reducing the unemployment rate to 4.2 per cent.

116. China was drafting a law to safeguard the rights and interests of farmers. Agricultural taxes were being gradually lowered with a view to achieving nationwide tax exemption by 2006. In 2004 the number of people living in poverty in rural areas had been reduced by 2.9 million.

117. To promote the right to education, children from poor families in certain parts of the country had been exempted with effect from 2005 from textbook and miscellaneous fees at the compulsory education stage. Some 14 million students had so far benefited from the programme. China's adult literacy rate had dropped below 5 per cent.

118. Gross domestic product had grown by 9.5 per cent in 2004 and the volume of trade had increased by 35.7 per cent. All in all, sustained economic growth had laid a solid basis for the further realization of the economic, social and cultural rights of the Chinese people.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.