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First regular session of 1984

SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 30 April 1984, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. BENDIX (Denmark)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1988 (LX)  
BY STATES PARTIES TO THE COVENANT CONCERNING RIGHTS COVERED BY ARTICLES 6 TO 9  
(continued)

Report of Ecuador (E/1984/7/Add.12)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Albornoz (Ecuador) took a seat at the table.
2. Mr. ALPORNOS (Ecuador), introducing his country's second periodic report, said that the years which had elapsed since the consideration of the first report, in 1980, had been marked by grave political and above all economic difficulties, suffering from the effects of the world crisis and inflation, the country had had to renegotiate its debt and to deal with a series of droughts followed by floods in 1983, when the richest agricultural areas of the country had experienced a nine-month winter because of the "El Niño" phenomenon. There had been four major strikes and, more recently, there had been one-week work stoppages in four provinces in reaction to the austerity measures which the Government had been forced to take in order to be able to service its debt in 1983 and 1984 - Ecuador's public and private debt currently amounted to \$8 billion and the interest due in 1984 came to approximately \$150 million.
3. In spite of all those problems, the country's democratic institutions had been safeguarded and various measures benefiting wage earners had been taken: in June 1983 the minimum wage had risen from 4,000 to 5,600 sucres; salaries and wages were now adjusted every six months instead of once a year; a 40-hour work week had been introduced as well as a fifteenth month for employees in the public and private sectors; the provisions relating to a 15 per cent share in the workers' profits were applied everywhere and the Ecuadorian Vocational Training Service had been extended. In addition, the Government had helped firms convert their debt into local currency and to revalue their assets so as to prevent unemployment. Because of inflation salaries and wages had not increased very much in real terms but it was none the less true that the Government had sought to improve the living conditions of rural workers and, in particular, to increase the productivity of small farmers through loans and agricultural extension work.
4. He drew the Working Group's attention to the provisions of Ecuador's political Constitution concerning the right of people to self-determination and concerning discrimination, which were referred to in section I of the report (arts. 1 to 5 of the Covenant).
5. Concerning the right to work and the right to work that was freely chosen, he referred to section II, B, paragraph 1 of the report. Regarding dismissal without due warning (para. 5), he drew attention to a draft revision of article 533 of the Labour Code under which employers would be required to pay any compensation due for dismissal without due warning within three days of a ruling on the case by the

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(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

labour inspector or labour judge. With regard to the difficulties affecting the degree of realization of the right to work (part C), he referred to article 16 of the Quito Declaration (see document A/39/118-E/1984/45) and to the statement made by President Hurtado at the Latin American Economic Conference in January 1984: the world economic crisis was such that the countries in the region - whose debts amounted to more than \$340 billion in all - had become net capital exporters and a 1-per-cent rise in interest rates in the industrialized countries increased the regional debt by \$3 billion.

6. He drew attention to the provisions relating to safe and healthy working conditions and particularly to a first draft of industrial health and safety regulations (sect. III, B), to equal opportunity for promotion (sect. III, C), and to holidays with pay (sect. III, D).

7. With regard, more specifically, to trade union rights and the protection of the workers' associations (sect. IV) he pointed out that a bill to increase financing of national workers' federations had been introduced in the Parliament.

8. Finally, he pointed out that the current social security scheme (V) had started in 1928 as a pension and savings fund for civil service workers and that, over the years, it had expanded (approximately 7 per cent of the population was currently covered) to include workers in the private sector, particularly rural workers and members of their families (see p. 10, last paragraph). The rural social insurance scheme whose funds were administered by a national commission, provided, inter alia, for retirement and disability pensions corresponding to 75 per cent of the minimum wage and a death benefit amounting to 25 per cent of the last wage. Ecuadorian social security would soon operate on the basis of capitalization and its future prospects were currently being examined on the basis of actuarial criteria currently used by companies with a view to establishing an optimum reserve.

9. The CHAIRMAN reminded the representative of Ecuador that the Working Group had not yet received Ecuador's reports concerning the rights covered by articles 10 to 12 and 13 to 15 of the Covenant, due in 1979 and 1981 respectively, and he expressed the hope that the Government would transmit them soon so that the Working Group could obtain a complete idea of the efforts that country was making to meet its obligations under the Covenant.

10. Mr. IIYAMA (Japan) said that the Working Group would be better able to assess how the provisions of the Covenant were being implemented in Ecuador if the Government provided more statistics and basic economic data in its reports. With regard to the minimum wage (sect. III, B, para. 2) he asked for an estimate of the proportion of the working population whose earnings were currently below the minimum wage. As for holidays with pay (sect. III, D) he was astonished to see that workers in the private sector were entitled to 15 days leave while civil servants were entitled to 30 days: did the two categories of workers not have the same rights? Concerning trade union rights, he asked how many trade unions there were in Ecuador and what powers they had to negotiate with the management to determine wages and working conditions.

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11. Mr. KORDS (German Democratic Republic) expressed regret that, on the whole, the Ecuadorian Government had not provided more figures in its report so as to enable the Working Group to measure how far articles 6 to 9 of the Covenant were being implemented. Having said that, Ecuador seemed to be doing all it could to meet its obligations in that connection.
12. Noting that the sectoral commissions which were responsible for fixing and revising minimum salaries and wages for various branches of activity each included one member appointed by the workers, he asked whether that member was a trade union representative and what role the unions played in that connection.
13. With reference to safe and healthy working conditions, he asked how far the ILO Conventions ratified by Ecuador were being implemented. What was the scope of the draft regulations on that subject? Had it come into force since the report was prepared? Generally speaking what would be the legal régime established in that context and who would be responsible for applying it?
14. With regard to trade unions (sect. IV of the report), he requested additional information, in particular, about the role they played in the economic and social activities of the enterprise and about how they participated in the elaboration of legislation governing labour questions.
15. The same section of the report indicated that any employee over 14 years of age could belong to an occupational association or union. He asked whether that meant that there were employees under 14 years of age and, if so, what type of work they did. In addition, he asked on what grounds workers' associations could be suspended or dissolved.
16. Referring to social security (sect. V of the report), he asked about the amount and duration of the benefits paid for the principal risks covered, particularly for sickness and maternity.
17. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUENO (Spain) observed that Ecuador's report did not contain any statistics, for example on the labour market or manpower. In particular, she requested a breakdown of the working population by economic sector and asked what the proportion of women was. She also requested more specific information about unemployment and about the extent to which it affected women and young people.
18. As to the legal status of aliens (sect. I of the report), who generally enjoyed the same rights as Ecuadorians, subject to the limitations established by the Constitution and by law, she asked what those limitations were. She was surprised that Ecuadorian employees could receive their vacation pay in advance (sect. III, part D, of the report) and asked whether they received their regular remuneration or a special payment. In addition, she asked whether all workers could join co-operatives and savings banks, which were mentioned in section IV of the report. Drawing attention to the last paragraph of the report, she observed that as she understood it, only the family members of participants covered by the rural social insurance scheme could receive family benefits, and she asked whether agricultural workers were therefore more privileged than other workers.

19. Mr. BAYONA (Peru) congratulated the Ecuadorian Government on the concise report it had prepared on the exercise of the rights covered by articles 6 to 9 of the Covenant. The Government was obviously trying to adapt its national legislation to the obligations it had assumed under the Covenant. He noted with satisfaction that the Ecuadorian Government had taken steps to combat unemployment, and to deal with the effects of the world economic crisis and of the natural disasters that had stricken the country. Like previous speakers, he requested additional statistics, particularly on employment, underemployment and unemployment.

20. Mr. TEXIER (France) said that the second report of Ecuador (E/1984/7/Add.12) gave a good picture of the legislative instruments dealing with the implementation of articles 6 to 9 of the Covenant but lacked precise figures to show the development of Ecuadorian law in that regard since the submission of the first report. He noted with satisfaction that, as the Secretary-General had recommended, the report began with a description of the implementation of articles 1 to 5 of the Covenant.

21. Referring to article 6, he requested additional information about the notion of "selection of migrant workers", which was contained in section II. B, paragraph 3 (c) (p. 3 of the report), and about the flow of workers between Ecuador and neighbouring countries. In addition, he requested more complete information about the employment situation in Ecuador and in particular, about the unemployment trend.

22. With regard to the implementation of article 7, he asked about the functioning and powers of the "Sectoral Commissions" that were responsible for fixing and revising minimum salaries and wages. Moreover, he asked about the level of salaries in the civil service and whether the minimum wage was the same in both the public and private sectors. Referring to safe and healthy working conditions, he requested additional information about the first draft of the industrial health and safety regulations mentioned in the report and asked whether the regulations established penalties for failure to comply with those provisions.

23. In connection with article 8, he requested detailed information about the exercise of the right to strike in Ecuador, about the frequency of collective action and about the number and organizational structure of trade unions. Lastly, he asked whether any progress had been made in the implementation of article 9 of the Covenant since the submission of the previous report.

24. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the expert from Denmark, also congratulated Ecuador on the way in which its second report (E/1984/7/Add.12) described the implementation of articles 1 to 5 of the Covenant and the legislation dealing with the implementation of articles 6 to 9. However, he observed that it would have been useful to include in the report more statistics on the population and on micro-economics. In particular, he requested more detailed information about the employment situation in Ecuador and about the specific measures taken to improve it.

(The Chairman)

25. In general, Ecuador's report should have given a clearer picture of the developments that had occurred in the implementation of articles 6 to 9 of the Covenant since the submission of the previous report.

26. In conclusion, he thanked the representative of Ecuador for the additional details he had provided in introducing his country's report and expressed the hope that Ecuador would submit reports on the implementation on the other articles of the Covenant.

27. Mr. ALBORNOZ (Ecuador) thanked members of the Working Group for their encouraging comments and for their understanding attitude towards the difficulties his country had encountered. He stressed that both the level of wages and working conditions had improved in Ecuador and that the strikes he had mentioned in his introduction of the report had been settled satisfactorily. In conclusion, he paid a tribute to the work accomplished by the experts on the Working Group and indicated that his country, which was a founding Member of the United Nations and which had participated in the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations, sincerely hoped that the submission of its report would contribute to efforts to make the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights a legal reality.

28. Mr. Albornoz (Ecuador) withdrew.

Report of the Philippines (continued) (E/1984/7/Add.4)

29. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Arcilla (Philippines) took a place at the table.

30. Mr. ARCILLA (Philippines) reiterated the commitment of the Philippines to the implementation of the Covenant, adding that implementation must be viewed in the context of historical, geographical and cultural diversity and of his country's freely chosen political and economic system based on free enterprise. That diversity, the unfavourable world economic situation and the lop-sided distribution of the benefits of progress in the world economy made it difficult to guarantee full employment and the protection of labour. Moreover, it was necessary for the Philippines to adapt the new guiding principles for labour regulation to local conditions and to find a solution to the geographical and other limitations in the way of their implementation.

31. In reply to a question from the French expert concerning expatriation, he said that his Government did not prevent its citizens from travelling or working abroad and that it encouraged scientists, artists and other specialists, who so desired, to return to the country by providing special incentives. He considered it perfectly understandable that, given its economic situation, France did not at the present time welcome Philippine migrant workers. Most of the domestic helpers referred to by the French expert came from Iran during the present unsettled times. Some of them had gone to western Europe as tourists and had decided to remain as domestic helpers. The Philippine Government, co-operating with western

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European Governments, had abrogated its previous 90-day no-visa agreement in order to prevent the recurrence of such cases. It could not, however, prevent its citizens from leaving the country as tourists or labourers, and the decision to grant visas still lay with the accepting countries.

32. In response to queries raised by the experts of France, the German Democratic Republic, Spain, Tunisia, Bulgaria, Ecuador and Denmark concerning the alleged discrimination against women in employment, he said that his Government was fully cognizant of the vital role of women in development, as was demonstrated by the establishment of the Commission on the Role of Filipino Women which aimed to achieve the integration of women as full and equal partners with men in the economic, political, social and cultural development effort. The Commission co-operated with governmental and private organizations with a view to implementing a five-year programme, the first phase of which was based on the education of rural women, and advised the President on the formulation of policies and the implementation of programmes for promoting the participation in development of Philippine women who comprised 49.8 per cent of the population and had enjoyed their political, economic and social rights long before any Western Power had set foot on Philippine soil. Women had participated alongside men in the struggle for independence and were now represented in all professions, in the public and private sectors alike. Their literacy rate had been 82.8 per cent in 1980, and in 1981, they had constituted 44.7 per cent of the labour force. Their rights were guaranteed by the Constitution and other laws and presidential decrees quoted in the report. Some labour laws, promulgated to protect working women but later found to lessen their employment opportunities, had been amended to ensure equal treatment. There were, of course, cultural and traditional prejudices which could be eradicated only slowly and progressively through such programmes as "Balikatan sa Kaunlaran" which was mentioned in the report (para. 52 (b)). Violations of the law of equal pay for equal work were dealt with by the National Labor Relations Commission, a tripartite body whose powers and duties were laid down in article 217 of the Labor Code of the Philippines.

33. With regard to trade-union activities, it was useful first to cite some statistics. The unemployment rate from January to December 1982 had been 5.1 per cent. As for social security coverage, an average of 37 per cent of the national budget financed the provision of social services. By the end of 1981, there had been 1,890 unions operating with 2.2 million members.

34. Since the submission of the second periodic report, changes had occurred which were not reflected in the report. The labour sector was now represented in the Parliament, in all consultative bodies at the local levels and in numerous government bodies. Tripartisanship had been instituted and wages and benefits had been increased pursuant to 10 presidential decrees. Referring to the Japanese expert's comment on paragraph 65 of the report, he explained that 60 per cent of the labour force earned more than the minimum wage, while only 26 per cent earned less, the latter group being workers in rural areas where different living conditions prevailed.

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35. The right to strike had been restored on 4 August 1981. Collective bargaining was a well established practice in the Philippines and, contrary to what happened in other countries, the Government had not intervened in any strikes which "involved the national interest" since the lifting of martial law in 1981, the settlement of such disputes having been assigned to the National Labor Relations Commission. Trade-union federations had been established in many economic sectors. With regard to paragraph 120 of the report, he would inquire from the authorities concerned why no text had been made available. In the matter of protection against arbitrary termination of employment, the labour unions could intervene through the National Labor Relations Commission. The expression "causes analagous to the foregoing" (para. 43 (e)) meant serious causes similar to those specified in subparagraphs (a) to (d). The weekly rest day was not determined by the employer alone, but was the result of a collective bargaining agreement, which enabled factors such as religious background to be taken into consideration. The certification requirement for collective bargaining was simply a precaution taken by the Ministry of Labor to ensure that the bargaining was being conducted in accordance with the law.

36. Referring to the query of the Ecuadorian expert concerning the National Livelihood Program, he said that the Program, launched in 1981, had been conceived to give proper balance to regional growth and to enable local communities to become self-reliant through the establishment of various livelihood projects to be managed by the local residents themselves addressed to the poorest of the poor; it was supervised by the Government and was definitely successful. Products from the enterprises established under the Program were reaching foreign markets and the Philippines, which had so far been a supplier of raw materials and importer of finished products, was becoming a full-scale importer of finished products.

37. Mr. Arcilla (Philippines) withdrew.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that the Working Group had completed its consideration of the report submitted by the Philippines under Council resolution 1988 (LX) concerning the rights covered in articles 6 to 9 of the Covenant.

39. It was so agreed.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1988 (LX)  
BY STATES PARTIES TO THE COVENANT CONCERNING RIGHTS COVERED BY ARTICLES 13 TO 15

Report of Guyana (E/1982/3/Add.5)

40. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Karran (Guyana) took a place at the table.

41. The CHAIRMAN informed the Working Group that Guyana had submitted on the current day a document concerning the implementation of article 15 of the Covenant; it was therefore available only in English and would subsequently be issued as an addendum to the report of Guyana.



42. Mr. KARRAN (Guyana), presenting his country's report (E/1982/3/Add.5) and the document concerning the implementation of article 15 of the Covenant, said that several changes had taken place in his country since 1981, the year in which the report had been prepared. The new Constitution which had entered into force in February 1980 would facilitate implementation of article 15 of the Covenant.
43. Guyana, formerly a British colony, had become independent in May 1966 and had established a socialist society using the "co-operative" as the means of achieving economic, social and cultural development. The aim of that type of society was to provide the opportunity for Guyanese to acquire the relevant skills and attitudes that would help them to play a significant role in building the nation. For that purpose the education system must function in accordance with the social and economic structure planned for the country. In order to ensure the exercise of the right to education, his Government had introduced several measures to improve physical, geographical and socio-economic accessibility to schools, particularly the rural and hinterland areas.
44. There had been a qualitative development of the educational system through the introduction of innovative practices and educational reforms. They included the introduction of co-education at all educational institutions; the development of multilateral and community high school programmes suited to the aptitude of individual children; the remodelling of the secondary school entrance examination to allocate all students to either a multilateral or a community high school programme; the development and implementation of more relevant curricula; the establishment of the National Advisory Council for Technical Education and Training, to co-ordinate and rationalize technical education at the secondary and post-secondary levels; the provision of hinterland scholarships; the introduction of supplementary teacher-training programmes; on-the-job training for teachers and administrators; the expansion of non-formal education; and the establishment of the Mathematics and Science Unit. Those measures were specifically intended to make education available to all citizens, irrespective of sex, race or religion.
45. With regard to the implementation of article 13 of the Covenant, he stated that education was free in Guyana, except at certain private establishments. As to primary education (sect. I.A), the most recent statistics showed that the enrolment ratio was over 95 per cent. With respect to secondary education (sect. I.B), the three types of secondary institution made it possible to educate children according to their aptitude. The general programme in the multilateral high schools gave students an opportunity, on the basis of their performance, to sit examinations for the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) and/or examinations set by the Caribbean Examination Council. Those who performed well at such examinations were allowed, after a further two-year period of study, to write the GCE (Advanced Level) examinations, after which they could apply for admission to the University of Guyana or institutions of higher education overseas. The four-year community high school programme offered vocational and technical training to students who were less academically oriented. Such students could, however, be transferred to multilateral schools after three years, on the basis of their performance.

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46. In keeping with the national policy of increased agricultural production, the school agriculture programme had production as one of its major goals. While there was no intention to degrade achievement in academic subjects, priority was given to skill areas such as agriculture and the related fields of home economics, industrial arts and business education. The socialization process, whereby work was introduced into schools, was of great importance and was aimed at preparing students for production, which was a direct contribution to the nation's food security. That process was also a means of generating funds to guarantee the development of education despite the prevailing economic crisis.

47. With regard to section C of the report, he pointed out that the Adult Education Association, a voluntary organization, received a substantial grant from the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture, and from local authorities. Public corporations and private companies also paid for special courses for their employees. In addition to the adult education programmes referred to in the report, there were three important institutions: (1) the May Rodrigues Early School Leavers Centre, for girls who had not completed primary or secondary school; (2) the Sophia Centre, for emotionally disturbed students who were not easily accommodated in a formal system; and (3) the Guyana National Service, whose objectives were to raise the level of functional literacy, to prepare personnel to manage the Service and other youth organizations, and to prepare youth to start new settlements in the hinterland of Guyana. National Service volunteers lived under pioneering conditions and learned to provide for themselves and adapt to the needs of pioneering. Linkages existed among the agencies responsible for non-formal education and between those agencies and the formal education system.

48. With respect to section D of the report, he drew attention to paragraphs 11 and 12 and stated that the State had assumed full responsibility for education by taking practical measures to develop the school system through systematic financing of both capital and recurrent expenditure. In addition to statistical and other comparative data, section D of the report listed some of the difficulties encountered in developing the school system, the most worrying being the unavailability of adequate financing and trained personnel in specific areas. In that connection, he noted that it was important not only to train, but also to retain teachers; material conditions of teaching staff must be improved. The principal laws and other agreements adopted to that end were dealt with on pages 11 to 15 of the report. To supplement the information regarding factors and difficulties affecting improvement of the material conditions of teaching staff, he stated that, despite financial constraints, his Government had carried out a general revision of teachers' salaries with effect from 1 January 1983. It was hoped that such measures and the improved training facilities at the Teacher Training Institution and at the University of Guyana would help to reduce the attrition rate of teachers.

49. Turning to sections F and G of the report, he said that the right of parents to ensure the religious education of their children in conformity with their own convictions was enshrined in article 145 of the Constitution. The liberty of

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individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions was set out in section 34A of chapter 39:01 of the Laws of Guyana (Education).

50. As to the implementation of article 14 of the Covenant, he referred to paragraph 61 of the report and stated that, despite economic constraints, Guyana was committed to fulfilling its obligations. With regard to article 15, he pointed out that although Guyana had a relatively small population, it had six population groups, each with a different culture. As indicated on page 1 of the document supplementing the report, the State honoured and respected the diverse cultures and sought to develop out of them a socialist national culture. It therefore recognized the need to take action to that end. In that connection, the Department of Culture, which was responsible for the nation-wide management of cultural activities and for servicing cultural exchange agreements with foreign countries, pursued, through specialized institutions and at all levels of the school system, activities in the areas of art, music, dance, creative writing and drama. He referred the Working Group to the sections of the report concerning measures to guarantee the right to enjoy the benefits and applications of scientific progress and measures to protect the moral and material interests of authors.

51. The information in the report and the information he had provided in his statement gave only a sample of Guyana's efforts to ensure that everyone enjoyed the right to education and the right to take part in cultural life. The Ministry with that responsibility was intensely aware of its pivotal role and was constantly reappraising that role to ensure that its services were in line with national goals. He apologized for the late presentation of the report and thanked the members of the Working Group for their patience and understanding.

52. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUENO (Spain) said that while she was grateful to the representative of Guyana for his introduction, she believed that additional statistical data would help to give a better picture of the situation in Guyana with regard to culture and education. Perhaps the other members of the Working Group would agree with her that figures should be provided on Guyana's total population, the breakdown by sex, the age pyramid and the proportion of young people, as well as information on the unemployment rate and the way in which women and young people were affected by unemployment, even if the question of unemployment was not directly relevant to the report. She would also like to know what the student-teacher ratio was and what proportion of women made up the teaching staff, particularly at the university level. With regard to adult education, she had the impression that there were, in addition to the programmes referred to in the report, specialized centres for students who had particular learning problems. She requested further details on that subject. As to university education, she asked what courses were offered, how many Guyanese students attended universities abroad and in which countries, and what was the system for awarding scholarships.

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53. Mr. TEXIER (France) said that the report of Guyana (E/1982/3/Add.5) gave a clear picture of the implementation of articles 13 to 15 of the Covenant in that country. However, since the statistical information contained in the report was somewhat out of date, he would like to receive more recent data on the situation of education in Guyana.

54. Referring to paragraph 5 (a), he asked what was meant by "secondary departments of primary schools". With regard to paragraph 8 (f), he asked whether the metric system had been put into effect in Guyana, whether the preparatory courses that had been planned had actually been given and, if so, what results they had had. The statistics given on pages 6 to 9 of the report showed that there was quite a difference between average enrolment and average attendance at the various levels of the educational system, which suggested that absenteeism was high. He asked what the causes of that phenomenon were and whether the situation had improved since the academic year 1979/80. On the subject of admission to secondary schools (para. 51), he asked the representative of Guyana to confirm that, even though performance was the major factor, parents had a measure of freedom of choice, and he asked on what basis pupils were assigned to the various schools.

55. With regard to the implementation of article 15 of the Covenant, he said it was his understanding that the legislation referred to in section C of the additional document that had been circulated had more to do with freedom of expression than with the protection of the moral and material interests of authors. He therefore asked whether there was any legislation dealing specifically with copyright and, if so, what form it took.

56. Mr. KORDS (German Democratic Republic) said that the report of Guyana, together with the supplementary information provided in the introductory statement by its representative, showed how, although the country had attained independence relatively recently, it was endeavouring to set up a very sophisticated educational system that was not only consonant with the Covenant but also promoted its future social and economic development. While it was not easy in a multicultural society to find a common approach to education, the laws and regulations referred to in the report gave a fairly clear picture of the efforts the Government was making towards that end and its objectives.

57. Like the expert from France, he wished to know what the reasons were for the discrepancy between average enrolment and average attendance in schools. Referring to page 16 of the report (para. 50), where it was stated that parents normally chose primary schools for their children to attend, he emphasized the role of parents in the education of their children and the contribution they could make to the educational system, and asked what steps were taken in Guyana to provide information to parents and to encourage them to send their children to school. Lastly, referring to article 15 of the Covenant, he asked what Guyana was doing to preserve the historical heritage of the many ethnic groups which made up its population and whether any national or regional institutions had been established for that purpose. He would also like to receive data on the number of museums, libraries and cultural centres which had been set up for the population as a whole and for the various groups.

58. Mr. Mitrev (Bulgaria) took the Chair.

59. Mr. IYAMA (Japan) said that the amount of space devoted by Guyana in its report to the implementation of the right to education showed how important it considered that right to be. He asked what the difference was between the three types of secondary-level institutions referred to in paragraph 5 of document E/1982/3/Add.5 and what the attendance rate was in secondary schools. He also asked how the special unit in the Ministry of Education referred to in paragraph 43 co-operated with educational establishments in making decisions and whether any special procedure had been established for selecting textbooks and other teaching materials and for other similar purposes. With regard to paragraphs 63 and 64 of the report, he wished to know to what extent financial constraints made it difficult to provide free education for students at the University of Guyana. As to the implementation of article 15 of the Covenant, and more specifically the responsibilities of the Department of Culture, he asked how many countries Guyana had concluded cultural exchange agreements with and would like to be told, if that was possible, which countries they were.

60. Mr. Bendix (Denmark) resumed the Chair.

61. The CHAIRMAN, speaking in his capacity as the expert from Denmark, stressed the value of the additional information that had been provided by the representative of Guyana. It was regrettable, however, that the statistics given on pages 6 to 9 of document E/1982/3/Add.5 covered academic year 1979/80 only and consequently did not illustrate the trends in average enrolment and average attendance. Referring to the last line of table 1, he said he was astonished by the difference between the figures given for average enrolment and average attendance respectively, since the latter was greater than the former.

62. With regard to the improvement of the material conditions of teaching staff, he asked what the usual retirement age was for teachers, since the age given in paragraph 25 of the report (55 years) was not the same as that given in paragraph 21 (a) (60 years). He found it surprising that teachers were entitled to one month of annual leave only after five years of service (see p. 13 of the report) and would welcome additional details on that subject. He asked what the abbreviation "AMM" in paragraph 35 of the report stood for and what the role of that trade union was in the planning and execution of the sports activities referred to in paragraph 45.

63. As he understood it, while the legislation of Guyana guaranteed the freedom to establish and manage private educational activities, the right to choose a school could, in practice, be exercised only with regard to State schools, and he asked whether his interpretation of the information in the report was correct. Referring to paragraph 59, he asked what conditions had to be met in order to obtain permission from the Ministry of Education to set up a school or any other educational establishment, and how many private schools there were in Guyana. He had the impression that the act referred to in the second subparagraph of paragraph 62 was aimed at the "nationalization" of educational establishments, which seemed to be at variance with the concept of a private school. He would

(The Chairman)

therefore welcome clarification with regard to the rules applicable in the matter of choice of a school and on any difficulties which arose in that connection.

64. Referring to subparagraphs (b) and (c) of paragraph 1 and the first sentence in paragraph 5, which seemed to be contradictory, he asked what range of ages corresponded to secondary education. In conclusion, he reminded the representative of Guyana that the Working Group was awaiting with interest his country's report on other rights covered by the Covenant.

65. Mr. MITREV (Bulgaria) said that he was impressed by the efforts which Guyana was making to give effect to articles 13 to 15 of the Covenant and by its achievements, in particular with regard to free education and adult education programmes. The part of the report dealing with the improvement of the material conditions of teaching staff showed the keen attention paid by Guyana to those important members of society.

66. He asked what the main differences were between the curricula of the secondary institutions referred to in paragraph 5 and to what extent sending pupils to one or another of those establishments affected their chances of going on to higher education. On the subject of paragraph 8 (f), he would like to know whether the courses designed to prepare the population for the metric system were still being given and what results had been achieved. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the dialogue which had been initiated with Guyana would continue during the Working Group's future consideration of the implementation by that country of the other rights provided for in the Covenant.

67. Mr. Karran (Guyana) withdrew.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.