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SUBCOMMISSION ON PROMOTION AND PROTECTION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS
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Item 12: Review of further developments in fields with which the Sub-Commission has been or may be concerned

Mr. Chairman,

Will you and all the colleagues allow me to cite a quotation stated by a man of experience and wisdom. A man who went through the first and second World Wars, and later was elected as the president of the United States of America during the fifties. This man said "every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed - those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone - it is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children." Dwight D. Eisenhower said on another occasion "I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than are governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of their way and let them have it."

If an ordinary man made this statement, it might not generate much attention. But when a statement like this is made the world should listen closely and pay more attention because it was made by a military commander who survived the tragic consequences of two devastating world wars and lived to hold the presidency of a superpower as the United States. A country, which I might add, currently produces and exports weapons of mass destruction world-wide, and its naval fleets and armed forces are marching nowadays across different corners of the world with and without justification. Thus, a statement from an experienced and wise military commander has its deep meaning and warning, which should be highly considered by this Subcommission, and more so by non-governmental organizations who truly represent the people of the world.

Mr. Chairman,

Evidently, in general the manufacturing of arms and weapons of mass destruction represents third of humanity's mischanneled effort worldwide. If this enormous human and financial investment could be drastically and wisely shifted to agriculture as well as to the establishment of schools, and educational institutions and universities, it would without a doubt transform our world to a true paradise in which there would not be one poor or deprived human being.

Mr. Chairman,

We are repeating our appeal year after year. If we kept repeating our appeals without taking effective and practical steps towards implementing a concrete plan of action with the support of the world community, our pleas would be of no significant consequence. Therefore, it is our collective duty, especially that of non-governmental organizations and members of the Subcommission, to rise to the challenge of highlighting the issues and identifying the necessary measures to accomplish the desired ends in co-operation with the extensive machinery of the different United Nations bodies and specialized agencies.

In view of our organization's active role for the past twenty-five years, we are of the opinion that perhaps one of the best means to achieve a common and worthwhile goal is in directing our attention and the attention of others to the field of education. Humanity's aspirations and advancement belong to every fellow human being without distinction to race, national or social origin, political or other opinion.

We and many others believe that humanity's future and its progress and prosperity depend, largely and essentially, on the success of educational institutions worldwide at guiding future generations to believe in a united humanity as reflected in the essence of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We are certain you realize that the success of this institution, the United Nations, depends to a large extent on how much people, all the people, believe in its effectiveness and its effect on their dreams for a better and more prosperous future without tragedies and wars. We are also certain that you are aware that ninety percent of the people of this planet lack the basic knowledge about the role this great institution plays in international affairs, and they often lack the understanding of the United Nations role as it relates to their lives and future.

Therefore, it is our solemn duty and obligation, each in the sphere of our own specialized fields, to do all we can to educate and inform the people of our planet about the importance of this institution in their lives and for their future.

Since the Charter of the United Nations was intended for the people of this earth as it stated "We the people of the United Nations," then perhaps one of the means to spread the word and to reach, as we hope, a sharing of basic knowledge and understanding about the role of the UN among the people of all nations, is to encourage such awareness through education.

Reference in the curriculum of the last year of elementary school to the Charter of the United Nations and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, mere mentioning of the basic guiding principles of the two historical documents in the curriculum of the last year of junior high, and highlighting in the curriculum of high school some details concerning the important chapters and articles contained in these internationally recognized universal documents, can and will have a great impression and a positive impact on the spirits of our children, who are the leading generations of the future.

We are certain, Mr. chairman, that in spite of the simplicity of our recommendation, even if it was not officially adopted by the Subcommission, it would at least prompt the experts and NGOs to think along these lines about this important issue and to study it further to achieve the same or similar purposes.

Thank you for your attention.

Asalam Alaykum.

EA Ford /

23 August 1999