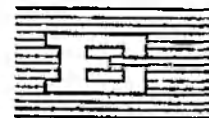


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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities

Working Group on Indigenous Populations
Second session
Items 5 and 6 of the provisional agenda

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS PERTAINING TO THE PROMOTION AND
PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF
INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS (Item 5)

CONSIDERATION OF THE EVOLUTION OF STANDARDS CONCERNING
THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS (Item 6)

Information received from Governments

1. In its resolution 1982/34 of 7 May 1983, the Economic and Social Council authorized the Sub-Commission to establish annually a working group on indigenous populations to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations, including information requested by the Secretary-General annually from Governments, specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status, particularly those of indigenous peoples, to analyse such materials, and to submit its conclusions to the Sub-Commission. It further decided that the Working Group should give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations.
2. Accordingly, appropriate communications requesting such information were addressed by the Secretary-General to Governments and to organizations referred to in the resolution.
3. The present document contains a summary of the replies 1/ received from Governments 2/ up to 10 June 1983. Additional replies, if any will be summarized in addenda to this document.

1/ The full texts of the replies are available for consultation in the files of the Secretariat.

2/ The Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, Iraq, Nigeria and Portugal have stated that there are no indigenous populations in their countries and, consequently, have no information to offer in this connection.

WGIP P3 GOV/UNIT 1

THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

[Original: English]
[21 March 1983]

1. The policy of the Yemen Arab Republic is inspired by our Islamic religion which does not discriminate between individuals. Accordingly, Yemen does not believe in racial discrimination on grounds of religion, colour, language, national origin or occupation.
2. The policy of the State is based on the National Charter, which stipulates that all persons shall be equal before the law. The National Charter also condemns the practice and propagation of discrimination, which it seeks to eliminate in the interests of national unity.
3. The need for equality and social solidarity based on justice, freedom and equal rights is emphasized in article 6, paragraph 1, of our Constitution.
4. The Constitution guarantees public and private freedom within the limits of the Islamic Shari'a and the law. It also guarantees security and equal opportunities for all citizens (article 8 of the Constitution).
5. Article 19 of the Constitution guarantees equality with regard to public rights and obligations and article 74 further guarantees equality between men and women with regard to rights and obligations.
6. Article 136 of the Constitution guarantees that every citizen shall enjoy the right to work and to free choice of employment within the limits of the law.
7. Article 42 of the Constitution stipulates that all persons shall enjoy equal human rights and that the internal and external policy of the State shall give equal consideration to the human rights of all persons.
8. Article 43 of the Constitution stipulates that the State shall respect human rights without distinction on grounds of religion, colour, sex, language, national origin or occupation.

NORWAY

[Original: English]

[5 May 1983]

A. The Nordic Sami Council

The Nordic Sami Council was established at the second Nordic Sami conference at Karasjok in 1956 as an "agency for co-operation on Sami matters between Finland, Norway and Sweden." According to its present rules, the object of the Council is to protect the interests of the Samis as private individuals and as a people, to promote their solidarity, and to ensure that the Samis also in the future will be recognized and treated as a people whose economic, social and cultural rights must be safeguarded in the legislation of the individual countries.

In accordance with this purpose, the Nordic Sami Council has through the years taken up many matters of importance to the Sami people. The range of its commitment can be illustrated by the present total of seven sub-committees under the Council: for legal questions, museums, business and trade, language, information, education and handicrafts. The Nordic Sami Council nominates representatives in certain official agencies for Nordic co-operation, such as the Nordic Literature Committee and the Nordic Language Secretariat.

B. The Swedish/Norwegian Sami Federation

At a meeting in Kautokeino in December 1982 of representatives of the National Sami Federation and the National Federation of Swedish Samis, it was decided to form a new agency for Sami co-operation across national boundaries in addition to the Nordic Sami Council. The new agency has been named the Swedish/Norwegian Sami Federation.

An interim steering committee consisting of two representatives from each national federation was appointed to draft proposed rules for the new Nordic Sami Federation.

C. The Norwegian Sami Rights Commission

At a Cabinet meeting on 7 January 1980, the Government decided to implement various measures of importance to the Sami population in Norway. It was decided to set up an inter-Ministerial co-ordinating committee for Sami questions, to enlarge and give increased support to the Norwegian Sami Council, to establish elected municipal agencies to take part in the administration in Finnmark of non-cadastral government land not included in cadastral surveys, and to initiate a report on questions concerning Sami culture.

The Norwegian Sami Rights Commission, as the committee came to be called, was appointed by the Crown Prince Regent's Decree of 10 October 1980,

Its main task is to prepare reports on questions relating to rights to natural resources in areas settled by Samis.

It is to report partly on the Samis' present legal status, and partly on what changes are desirable in that legal status.

Where necessary, the Commission is to take factors of legal history and international law into account in its considerations.

Right from the start the Commission divided itself into working groups for different groups of subjects. As of 1 January 1981, four such groups were in operation, dealing respectively with:

- (a) The question of the geographical extent of the area of their mandates;
- (b) Studies of legal history;
- (c) The question of the use of, rights to, and systems of administration of natural resources;
- (d) The question of a Sami electoral roll and representative agency.

Later, another working group was set up to plan the Commission's journeys of inspection in Finnmark.

As the work progressed, adjustments were made in the organization of the working groups. At the end of 1981 the Commission's activities were being carried out in three groups for, respectively:

The question of a constitutional provision concerning the legal status of the Samis and of a representative body for Samis;

The questions of the use of, rights to, and systems of administration of natural resources in Finnmark, including questions relating to historical legal circumstances;

Questions of international and foreign law.

So far, the Commission has given particular priority to the constitutional question and the matter of a representative body, with the intention of reporting on them separately.

In this first part of its report, the Commission also intends to deal with the international and foreign law aspects of the questions it has been given to report on, in addition to some background material of a more general nature. The Commission has provisionally arranged the contents of the first part of its report under the following headings:

- (a) Concerning the Sami Rights Commission
- (b) Summary
- (c) The Samis in Norway
- (d) Survey of the discussion of Sami rights
- (e) International and foreign law
- (f) Ethnicity and its significance
- (g) Guidelines in principle

- (h) The question of separate constitutional provisions concerning the legal status of the Samis
- (i) The question of a separate representative body for Samis
- (j) Economic and administrative consequences of the Commission's proposals
- (k) Comments on individual provisions
- (l) Draft of new provisions

It should be added that the publication "The Sami Language in Basic School" was published in 1980 in the Norwegian Official Reports series (November 1980: 59) into the Sami and Norwegian languages.

HONDURAS

[Original: Spanish]
[20 May 1983]

The information provided is contained in three reports by official bodies, as follows:

A. Ministry of Public Education

Education of ethnic minorities in Honduras

Because of the cross-breeding which began at the time of the Conquest and colonization, the ethnic groups which retained their cultural identity have been slowly but steadily absorbed into what is now referred to as the "national culture".

The reasons for the loss of cultural identity by ethnic minority groups in Honduras are as follows:

A rigid educational system which has not allowed the educational process to be made more flexible and better suited to the needs, interests and problems of the culturally different populations which still exist in the country;

The lack of a State cultural policy designed to preserve and safeguard the cultural values of the ethnic groups forming the Honduran nation;

The cultural domination of the ethnic minority groups by whites and mestizos, who have possessed and still possess political and economic power and have used it to exploit those groups and keep them in a state of permanent marginality;

Hispanicization. It was long thought that the basis of the nation lay in the use of Spanish as the sole instrument for communication between Hondurans;

Anthropological misconceptions concerning persons possessing and practising a different culture. This factor is partly responsible for slowing down the process of incorporating ethnic minorities in the political, economic and cultural life of the country;

On the basis of the situation described, the education imparted to the members of ethnic minority groups is the same as that received by the rest of the Honduran population.

The use of Spanish as the language of instruction for populations with their own native tongue affects their progress and performance in school, with the result that they have a higher drop-out and failure rate at the end of the year. The State has not institutionalized bilingual education, which would be an effective means of preserving indigenous cultural features now in the process of extinction.

The anthropologist, Margaret L. Royce de Dennis, is carrying out a bilingual education project under the sponsorship of the Instituto de Verano. She has published a primer, Español-Tol, for the Xicaque tribes in the Montaña de la Flor, Department of Francisco Morazán. The use of this bilingual primer has been authorized by the Ministry of Public Education through Order No. 2449-EP of 1981.

In conclusion, the ethnic minority groups existing in Honduras receive an education which is no different to that of anyone else. Other experiments in bilingual education conducted in the country have not received the necessary support and have run up against the lack of teachers specializing in this area.

B. Honduran Forestry Development Corporation (COHDEFOR)

1. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

In view of the marginal and socially disadvantaged position from which the country's indigenous groups, particularly those in the Department of Yoro, have long suffered, the Government of the Republic took a firm decision to help resolve the situation, launching the project for co-operation in the development of the indigenous population of Yoro through Order No. 211 of 18 May 1981; under this Order, the various centralized and decentralized institutions of the public sector were instructed to play an effective role in the implementation of the project within their area of competence.

2. DESIGN AND SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The project forms part of the policy measures included in the National Plan for Social Development, 1982-1986, and has been designed to have an integrated, multisectoral and inter-institutional character. It also reflects the local development policy established in the plan. It is to be implemented over a period of five years (1982-1986) and its coverage involves providing assistance to 21 tribes situated in six municipalities in the Department of Yoro.

In the first phase of implementation, the objectives are to improve the socio-economic conditions of indigenous tribes and create conditions for the project's gradual extension to the remaining tribes. In this first phase, it is intended to carry out activities related to:

Social organization for community participation;

Promotion of agricultural production;

Forestry management and development;

Expansion and improvement of physical infrastructure (access roads);

Improvement and construction of social infrastructure (construction of housing).

The total cost of the project over the five-year period amounts to 6 million lempiras, 2.8 million of which will be contributed as a gift by the European Economic Community, to finance productive projects and projects relating to physical and social infrastructure.

3.(a) INTER-INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

In order to guarantee the implementation of the project and define the responsibilities to be discharged by each of the participating agencies, an inter-institutional co-ordination agreement was signed on 24 August 1982 between the following bodies:

Honduran Forestry Development Corporation (Co-ordinator);

Technical Secretariat of CONSUPLANE;

National Agrarian Institute;

Housing Institute;

Department of Communications, Public Works and Transport;

Department of Natural Resources;

Department of Public Education;

Department of Public Health;

Department of Culture and Tourism.

As regards organization, inter-institutional co-ordination committees have been formed at the national and local levels with representatives officially designated by each executing agency.

(b) FUNCTIONS OF THE HONDURAN FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A. Implementing the project as principal executing agency within the framework of the social system for forest areas, for which the project will serve as a pilot and experimental scheme in developing a policy of incorporating the rural population in social development in forest areas.

B. Formulating forestry projects and promoting their implementation among the indigenous communities so that those communities can make proper use of the forests to improve their standard of living.

C. Preparing an inventory of forestry resources in the area of the 21 Torrupán tribes with the aim of using it as a tool to programme the use of forestry resources within the framework of the project.

D. Providing the various institutions with the physical infrastructure (premises and equipment) to carry out the project at the field level. In addition, channelling the funds appropriated as a counterpart to the European Economic Community's donation.

E. Ensuring that the forest in the area of the various tribes is used for their direct benefit, mainly through timber production and related industries, within the framework of the strategy and objectives of the project.

4. PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

The project is currently in the first stage of implementation, the objectives set for its introductory phase having already been achieved; for this purpose, financial support was obtained from UNICEF in the form of a donation of 79,000 lempiras intended for financing research activities and distributing audiovisual equipment for use in community development and training. In May 1979 an inter-institutional technical team made a socio-economic diagnosis covering

five tribes and later prepared profiles for specific projects which served as a basis for requesting financing from the European Economic Community (EEC). Through an agreement signed with the Government of the Republic on 5 November 1981, the EEC approved an appropriation of 2.8 million lempiras in the form of a donation.

Starting in March 1981, the executing agency CONDEFOR proceeded to install and organize the project office, based in the city of Yoro.

Activities conducted under the project to date may be summarized as follows:

Development and training for the five tribes covered by the first phase of the project;

Initiation of activities for the preparation of an inventory of forestry resources located on land belonging to the Torrupán Indians;

Preparation of a population census of Indians in the communities of El Pate, Subirana and El Tablón;

Support for the implementation of a project relating to the rehabilitation and utilization of timber which is affected by the pine weevil and is located on the land of the Subirana tribe. This project is being implemented with funds from the donation made by the EEC, and it is proposed to make productive use of 10,000 cubic metres of timber damaged by this pest by organizing the members of the Subirana Indian community into a co-operative enterprise;

It is also planned to carry out, in the course of the present year, three projects for the resettlement of the population of the Torrupán Indian communities of Subirana, Santa Marta and El Pate and to build 50 houses for each one, as well as to build and widen 52 km of access roads to the benefit of the five tribes in the first phase of the project for the Torrupán Indians in the area of Yoro.

C. Department of culture and tourism (SECTUR)

1. BACKGROUND

The Department of Culture and Tourism (SECTUR) was established by Decree No. 234 of 23 July 1975 and was initially assigned responsibilities and functions in the area of information.

From its inception, one of its main concerns was indigenous affairs, given the complexity of the problem in Honduras, whose territory is a meeting place for cultural influences from the north and south of the continent, with the result that it has a series of ethnic groups such as: Chortls and Mayas in the west, Lencas in the west central area, Xicaques in the central area, Garífunas on the Atlantic coast, Payas, Sumos and Miskitos in the north-east, and Chorotegas on the southern coast.

Of these groups, the Miskitos, the Payas, the Sumos, the Lencas, the Garífunas and the Xicaques have been the most studied by Honduran and foreign researchers.

2. PAST RECORD

As early as 1976, the Garífuna problem occupied the attention of the Ministry of Culture, in terms both of research and cultural development and of community development. This assistance has been maintained to the present day through a cultural development officer in the Atlantic area, from Baja Mar in Cortés to Cuaquira in Colón.

From 1979 to 1981 the situation of the Sumo-Paya was studied in depth in the areas of El Carbón and Culmí in the Department of Olancho by a sociologist of the Honduran Study and Cultural Development Centre (CEDCH), which comes under the Directorate-General of Culture, with the aim of promoting community development projects among these tribes, respecting their religious traditions, language and way of life.

Since 1977, the Intibucá Indigenous Handicrafts Training Centre (CICAI), a subordinate body of the Directorate-General of Culture, has been operating in the city of La Esperanza, in the heart of the Lenca area; it has been imparting experience in the working of hides and skins, tailoring and dressmaking, yarns and textiles, carpentry, pottery and metal-working and has already produced a large number of graduates who spread the knowledge acquired among the indigenous groups to which they belong.

The Department of Culture forms part of the Technical Committee of the Project for Co-operation in Indigenous Development, an inter-institutional body answerable to the Higher Council for Economic Planning (CONSUPLANE), which co-ordinates the work of the various institutions concerned with indigenous affairs (COHDEFOR, IMA, IHAH, the Ministry of Education, etc.) and channels the funds earmarked for the indigenous sector by the Central Government and the European Economic Community.

By Order No. 147 of the Department of Culture and Tourism, dated 7 April 1981, the National Office of Indigenous Affairs was set up as a specialized unit of DEDCH, coming under the Directorate-General of Culture. This office was disbanded in 1982 because of budgetary problems.

The new legislation for the protection of the cultural heritage of Honduras envisages radical measures to protect the independent culture of the indigenous communities in all its manifestations.

An analysis is being made of the situation of the Guancascos distributed throughout the Lenca area with a view to subsequent rehabilitation work.

In 1983 the Department of Culture granted 10 fellowships to young Xicaque Indians to allow them to undergo handicrafts training at the Intibucá Indigenous Training Centre (CICAI).

In addition, in co-operation with the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH), the Week of the Xicaque People is to be held in Tegucigalpa from 21 to 26 March 1983 with the aim of stimulating awareness among the Honduran population of the most pressing problems and needs of this segment of the indigenous population.

SWEDEN

[Original: English]
[20 May 1983]

In regard to the Samis, who constitute an original ethnic minority in Sweden, it should be pointed out that in September 1982, a Government Commission was entrusted with the task of investigating the possibilities of strengthening their legal position in respect of reindeer breeding. The Commission shall also consider the need for a special Sami organ to represent the Samis on various matters. Furthermore, the Commission shall propose measures in order to preserve and develop the Sami language.

In February 1983, the Government amended the terms of reference of the Commission. A primary concern of the Commission should be to clarify the special needs which can be derived from the situation of the Samis as an indigenous population. Reference is made to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The three main tasks of the Commission, mentioned above, remain unchanged. The work of the Commission ought to be completed within two years.

The terms of reference of the Commission are enclosed. 3/

A change in the Penal Code of Sweden should also be stated. As from 1 January 1983, an amendment was made to section 5 of chapter 5 as regards the offence of defamation. As a rule this offence is to be prosecuted only by the person aggrieved and not by a public prosecutor. From 1 January 1983, however, it may be subject to public prosecution, when the defamation alludes to someone's race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin or religious creed, provided that the person aggrieved reports the defamation for prosecution and that prosecution is called for in the public interest. As an example has been mentioned in the travaux préparatoires that prosecution should be instituted when somebody has been repeatedly defamed by allusion to his race or a similar characteristic at his place of work or in his residential area.

A translation of the new wording of chapter 5, section 5, of the Penal Code was enclosed. It reads:

"Offences referred to in sections 1-3 are not to be prosecuted except by the person aggrieved. However, defamation or grave defamation can be prosecuted by the public prosecutor if the person aggrieved reports the offence for prosecution and such prosecution is, for special reasons, found to be called for in the public interest. On the same conditions public prosecution can be instituted for defamation against a person in or for his exercise of public authority or against a person by allusion to his race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin or religious creed."

3/ The Government attached the Swedish text of the legal provisions relating to the Commission. The text is available in that language for consultation at the Secretariat.

MOROCCO 4/

[Original: French]
[24 May 1983]

The Kingdom of Morocco has repeatedly emphasized that racial discrimination in any form does not exist in its territory either in theory or in practice, since it is incompatible with the precepts and teachings of Islam, which constitute the foundations of Moroccan positive law.

In this connection, it is worth recalling that Islam - which, under article 6 of the Moroccan Constitution, is the religion of the State - requires respect for the physical and mental integrity of the human being and accords a pre-eminent position, in the scale of values which must regulate social conduct, to tolerance and coexistence between human beings, without regard for their political persuasions, religious beliefs, colour or ethnic origins. It is a teaching and injunction of Islam not only that human beings, and hence their rights, should be respected but also that they should be protected and defended against any attack or injury from whatever source. In the words of the Prophet's celebrated hadith, "Religion is (primarily) human relations".

That is the foundation of the philosophy of Islam and its sacred book - the Koran - which is justifiably regarded by many thinkers as the first declaration of human rights and of which the Universal Declaration of 1948 is no more than a fairly expressive but non-exhaustive synthesis.

Through its adherence to Islam, the Kingdom of Morocco has been able, in the course of its history, to develop a great tradition as regards the guarantee and observance of fundamental human rights. These rights have always been at the basis of the country's contemporary political life.

In the light of the foregoing, the Kingdom of Morocco is able to affirm yet again that the practice of discrimination, whether de facto or de jure, is unknown in its territory.

The Government has provided some information on the subject of the Berbers, which is summarized in the following paragraphs:

The term "Berber" has come back into increasingly frequent use: this term is used by devotees of linguistic differences to designate all the North African populations which express themselves locally in "Tachalhit", "Tamazhirt", "Tarifit", "Takbafilite", "Tomachikt" and other non-Arabic languages used in this area of territory, which stretches from the Atlantic to Egypt and from the Mediterranean to the Niger. All inhabitants of the Maghreb have been taught at school that "the Berbers were the first inhabitants of North Africa" and this is stated in all books dealing with North African questions. However, while

4/ The Government of the Kingdom of Morocco has submitted a paper discussing the refugees in Morocco, Moroccan nationality, Moroccan Jews and regional development. Within the latter part there is information relating to the Berbers, which is summarized here. The full text of the Moroccan Government's communication is available in French for consultation at the Secretariat.

ethnologists, geographers and historians, including modern ones, have popularized this word for purposes which are now generally familiar; there are people who, without disavowing the cultural heritage to which it refers, nevertheless repudiate the term's tendentious political connotations, particularly members of the very populations which it is intended to designate. The term is so vague and simplistic from the historical, ethnological and sociological standpoints that in the present day it undoubtedly fails by a wide margin to reflect the true situation of these populations within their national entity.

As far as Morocco is concerned, it should be emphasized that the Moroccan nation is an Arabized Berber nation and also a Berberized Arab nation; all Moroccans share a joint Berber/Arab heritage.

To ask how many "Berbers" live in Morocco is like asking how many Celts live in France, how many Latins live in Italy or how many Anglo-Saxons live in England.

On this point the Moroccan Jewish historian, Germain Ayache, has the following to say in his book Etudes d'histoire marocaine: "Like it or not, the Arabs exercised an influence on Berber society which, in turn, made all its Arabs - first the conquerors and then the immigrants - into Moroccans. Failure to give this two-way process the consideration it deserved could only, as indeed happened, create a misconception of the cohesion, in the course of its history, of the people among whom this process occurred" (G. Ayache, p.17).

Way back in the fourteenth century, the Maghrebian historian and sociologist, Ibn Khaldoun, remarked: "The Arabs and the Berbers (...) have been living in the Maghreb for so long that it is hard to imagine that they ever lived anywhere else".

The penetration of the Maghreb by Arabs from the east began in 642 and extended over some 50 years. However, the real "opening" of North Africa to a population of Arab origin was the work of Okba Ibn Nafi who in 670, at the head of 10,000 horsemen, founded Kairouan in Tunisia and drove his army on to the Atlantic. At the end of the century another Arab general, Moussa Ben Nossayr, entrusted the Spanish campaign to a Berber, Tarik Ibn Ziyad. From that time, the Islamization of Morocco was carried out by Berbers already converted. Their chiefs adopted Arabic as the language of administration, and the Arabization of the population with all the resultant demographic mixing gradually, over the centuries, gave the Moroccan people its distinctive "Moorish" character which is naturally termed - in all languages - "Arabo-Berber".

It should also be emphasized that migrations of Moroccan tribes - both Arab and Berber - as a consequence of wars, economic crises and epidemics fostered a constant intermingling of populations, even before the European penetration of Morocco. The result of these internal population movements was to facilitate the mingling of races, to make the major components of the culture unified and to give the individuals constituting the national community common characteristics.

Referring to the Arab-speaking Houara in the Taroudant region, Mukhtar Assoussi writes: "What happened to them was what happened to all Moroccan tribes; if one tries to trace the genealogy of all the parts of a tribe, one finds that there are really very few original members; each part has been reinforced by neighbouring groups actually belonging to another tribe; this is as true of the Berbers as it is of the Arabs. The foreigners in every tribe are very numerous" (Mukhtar Assoussi-Jazula, vol.IV, pp.98-99).

In addition, some observers have found among the Seksaoua in the heart of the High Atlas elements of law and social organization which can be explained only by migration from the Anti-Atlas, others have attributed Saharan origins to the architecture of the Middle Atlas, etc.

The Moroccan sociologist, Abdellah Laroui, has stated the following:

"Whatever might be thought of the cantonal segmentation and the fragmentation of economic circuits before the nineteenth century, the succession of migratory movements at regular intervals over 60 years made the Moroccan population more mobile. Major movements are nothing new in this part of Africa, and indeed are even the rule, but this time there was no outlet; since everything took place within a limited framework, mixing became a reality".

As a result of the various successive mixes of population occurring over a period of more than 1,000 years, it is today no longer possible to say who is 100 per cent Arab and who is 100 per cent Berber. It is very difficult to distinguish between the Arab element and the Berber element in the Moroccan population, since they have been living together since the remote past in all regions of the Kingdom, speak the same language, if not the same dialect, and follow virtually the same customs and practices in their way of life.

"What was known under the Protectorate as 'the Berber policy' was in fact an attempt to divide the country into two opposing blocs - 'Bled El Makhzen' (pacified territory) and 'Bled es-siba' (rebel territory) ... Everyone knows the result. The occupier stirred up a siba (insurrection), but one directed against himself and not, as he had thought, against the Bled El Makhzen. And in that unexpected siba, townfolk and plainsmen united with mountain-dwellers. Indeed, the idea that their unity was threatened was what spurred the Moroccans on in the struggle which ended in the foreigners' departure. If all this is true, why continue, even today, to hark back to the idea of two irretrievably opposed Moroccos?" (G. Ayache, Etudes d'histoire marocaine, p.23).

This divide-and-rule strategy of the colonizing power was at times based on an alleged linguistic, or at any rate dialectal, diversity and at others on a supposed ethnic or, for want of anything better, geographical diversity. However, in every instance foreign machinations were doomed to failure when they threatened the national unity of the Moroccan people.

These external dangers themselves have in fact constituted a prime catalyst for Moroccan national unity throughout Morocco's history:

"Four centuries of national defence (from the 15th century to the 19th century) against the same invaders (Spaniards and Portuguese) were sufficient to forge and perpetuate the national and moral unity of a people, even in the absence of more modern factors which have contributed to the formation of nations" (Germain Ayache, "Le sentiment national dans le Maroc du 19e siècle", Revue historique, 1968, p.395).

Regarding the question of the progress made in regional development, it should be noted that, in a desire to ensure that the population benefited rapidly from the independence which had been regained, the Moroccan Government drew up and implemented, from 1957 on, a series of ambitious development plans concerning practically all sectors of economic, social and cultural activity in every region of the Kingdom.

As regards the Saharan region, for instance, where nomads used to live, the Moroccan Government launched an emergency plan in spring 1976 to provide the southern provinces with the same infrastructure as the other provinces in the north and to give their economies a boost.

For this purpose, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the "Green March" in November 1976, a national loan for the development of the Sahara was floated in the amount of 1 billion dirhams (nearly 220 million dollars). This loan was in addition to the funds allotted by the Treasury and by specialized financial institutions for the implementation of projects in all areas (agriculture, transport and telecommunications, hydraulic works, fishing, education, public health, social matters, etc.).