

the various categories of stateless persons, and to submit these comments, with his observations, to the Economic and Social Council;

2. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to study, if possible at its sixteenth session, the text of the draft protocol and the comments received from interested governments and, in the light of these comments, to take whatever action seems useful in order that a text may be opened for signature after the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees has entered into force.

*391st plenary meeting,
6 November 1952.*

630 (VII). Convention on the International Right of Correction

The General Assembly,

Considering that establishment of the right of correction on an international basis would help to curb the dissemination of false news and to strengthen peace,

1. *Urges* all Members of the United Nations and the other States which were invited to the United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information^a to become parties to the Convention on the International Right of Correction, the text of which is annexed hereto and consists of the provisions relating to the right of correction contained in the preamble and articles of the draft Convention on the International Transmission of News and the Right of Correction approved by the General Assembly in resolution 277 C (III) of 13 May 1949 with the deletion of articles XVIII, XIX paragraph 2, and XXII paragraph (d), of the latter draft Convention and with the introduction as a new article (article IX), replacing the former article XVIII, of the following text: "The provisions of the present Convention shall extend to or be applicable equally to a contracting metropolitan State and to all the territories, be they Non-Self-Governing, Trust or Colonial Territories, which are being administered or governed by such metropolitan State.";

2. *Decides* that the said Convention shall be opened for signature at the close of the present session of the General Assembly.

*403rd plenary meeting,
16 December 1952.*

ANNEX

Convention on the International Right of Correction

PREAMBLE

The Contracting States,

Desiring to implement the right of their peoples to be fully and reliably informed,

^a See *United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information, held at Geneva, Switzerland, from 23 March to 21 April, 1948, Final Act*, United Nations Publication, Sales No.: 1948.XIV.2.

Desiring to improve understanding between their peoples through the free flow of information and opinion,

Desiring thereby to protect mankind from the scourge of war, to prevent the recurrence of aggression from any source, and to combat all propaganda which is either designed or likely to provoke or encourage any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression,

Considering the danger to the maintenance of friendly relations between peoples and to the preservation of peace, arising from the publication of inaccurate reports,

Considering that at its second regular session the General Assembly of the United Nations recommended the adoption of measures designed to combat the dissemination of false or distorted reports likely to injure friendly relations between States,

Considering, however, that it is not at present practicable to institute, on the international level, a procedure for verifying the accuracy of a report which might lead to the imposition of penalties for the publication of false or distorted reports,

Considering, moreover, that to prevent the publication of reports of this nature or to reduce their pernicious effects, it is above all necessary to promote a wide circulation of news and to heighten the sense of responsibility of those regularly engaged in the dissemination of news,

Considering that an effective means to these ends is to give States directly affected by a report, which they consider false or distorted and which is disseminated by an information agency, the possibility of securing commensurate publicity for their corrections,

Considering that the legislation of certain States does not provide for a right of correction of which foreign governments may avail themselves, and that it is therefore desirable to institute such a right on the international level, and

Having resolved to conclude a Convention for these purposes,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

For the purposes of the present Convention:

1. "News dispatch" means news material transmitted in writing or by means of telecommunications, in the form customarily employed by information agencies in transmitting such news material, before publication, to newspapers, news periodicals and broadcasting organizations.

2. "Information agency" means a Press, broadcasting, film, television or facsimile organization, public or private, regularly engaged in the collection and dissemination of news material, created and organized under the laws and regulations of the Contracting State in which the central organization is domiciled and which, in each Contracting State where it operates, functions under the laws and regulations of that State.

3. "Correspondent" means a national of a Contracting State or an individual employed by an information agency of a Contracting State, who in either case is regularly engaged in the collection and the reporting of news material, and who when outside his State is identified as a correspondent by a valid passport or by a similar document internationally acceptable.

ARTICLE II

1. Recognizing that the professional responsibility of correspondents and information agencies requires them to report facts without discrimination and in their proper context and thereby to promote respect for human rights and fundamental

freedoms, to further international understanding and co-operation and to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security,

Considering also that, as a matter of professional ethics, all correspondents and information agencies should, in the case of news dispatches transmitted or published by them and which have been demonstrated to be false or distorted, follow the customary practice of transmitting through the same channels, or of publishing, corrections of such dispatches,

The Contracting States agree that in cases where a Contracting State contends that a news dispatch capable of injuring its relations with other States or its national prestige or dignity transmitted from one country to another by correspondents or information agencies of a Contracting or non-Contracting State and published or disseminated abroad is false or distorted, it may submit its version of the facts (hereinafter called "communiqué") to the Contracting States within whose territories such dispatch has been published or disseminated. A copy of the communiqué shall be forwarded at the same time to the correspondent or information agency concerned to enable that correspondent or information agency to correct the news dispatch in question.

2. A communiqué may be issued only with respect to news dispatches and must be without comment or expression of opinion. It should not be longer than is necessary to correct the alleged inaccuracy or distortion and must be accompanied by a verbatim text of the dispatch as published or disseminated, and by evidence that the dispatch has been transmitted from abroad by a correspondent or an information agency.

ARTICLE III

1. With the least possible delay and in any case not later than five clear days from the date of receiving a communiqué transmitted in accordance with provisions of article II, a Contracting State, whatever be its opinion concerning the facts in question, shall:

(a) Release the communiqué to the correspondents and information agencies operating in its territory through the channels customarily used for the release of news concerning international affairs for publication; and

(b) Transmit the communiqué to the headquarters of the information agency whose correspondent was responsible for originating the dispatch in question, if such headquarters are within its territory.

2. In the event that a Contracting State does not discharge its obligation under this article with respect to the communiqué of another Contracting State, the latter may accord, on the basis of reciprocity, similar treatment to a communiqué thereafter submitted to it by the defaulting State.

ARTICLE IV

1. If any of the Contracting States to which a communiqué has been transmitted in accordance with article II fails to fulfil, within the prescribed time-limit, the obligations laid down in article III, the Contracting State exercising the right of correction may submit the said communiqué, together with a verbatim text of the dispatch as published or disseminated, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and shall at the same time notify the State complained against that it is doing so. The latter State may, within five clear days after receiving such notice, submit its comments to the Secretary-General, which shall relate only to the allegation that it has not discharged its obligations under article III.

2. The Secretary-General shall in any event, within ten clear days after receiving the communiqué, give appropriate publicity through the information channels at his disposal to

the communiqué, together with the dispatch and the comments, if any, submitted to him by the State complained against.

ARTICLE V

Any dispute between any two or more Contracting States concerning the interpretation or application of the present Convention which is not settled by negotiations shall be referred to the International Court of Justice for decision unless the Contracting States agree to another mode of settlement.

ARTICLE VI

1. The present Convention shall be open for signature to all States Members of the United Nations, to every State invited to the United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information held at Geneva in 1948, and to every other State which the General Assembly may, by resolution, declare to be eligible.

2. The present Convention shall be ratified by the States signatory hereto in conformity with their respective constitutional processes. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

ARTICLE VII

1. The present Convention shall be open for accession to the States referred to in article VI (1).

2. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

ARTICLE VIII

When any six of the States referred to in article VI (1) have deposited their instruments of ratification or accession, the present Convention shall come into force among them on the thirtieth day after the date of the deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification or accession. It shall come into force for each State which ratifies or accedes after that date on the thirtieth day after the deposit of its instrument of ratification or accession.

ARTICLE IX

The provisions of the present Convention shall extend to or be applicable equally to a contracting metropolitan State and to all the territories, be they Non-Self-Governing, Trust or Colonial Territories, which are being administered or governed by such metropolitan State.

ARTICLE X

Any Contracting State may denounce the present Convention by notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Denunciation shall take effect six months after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

ARTICLE XI

The present Convention shall cease to be in force as from the date when the denunciation which reduces the number of parties to less than six becomes effective.

ARTICLE XII

1. A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any Contracting State by means of a notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

2. The General Assembly shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such request.

ARTICLE XIII

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall notify the States referred to in article VI (1) of the following:

- (a) Signatures, ratifications and accessions received in accordance with articles VI and VII;
- (b) The date upon which the present Convention comes into force in accordance with article XIII;
- (c) Denunciations received in accordance with article X (1);
- (d) Abrogation in accordance with article XI;
- (e) Notifications received in accordance with article XII.

ARTICLE XIV

1. The present Convention, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts shall be equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations.

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall transmit a certified copy to each State referred to in article VI (1).

3. The present Convention shall be registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations on the date of its coming into force.

631 (VII). Future work of the United Nations in the field of freedom of information

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming that freedom of information is a fundamental human right and is the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated, the promotion of which is one of the fundamental tasks of the United Nations,

Considering that in 1946 the General Assembly initiated⁴ the study in the United Nations of the problems of freedom of information and continues to take great interest in the said problems and to concern itself with them directly,

Considering the continuing need for study, inquiry and investigation with a view to positive action for the removal of obstacles to the free flow of information,

Considering that the Third Committee has not studied the draft Convention⁵ on Freedom of Information during the sixth and seventh sessions of the General Assembly,

Noting the decision of the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 442 C (XIV) of 13 June 1952 to appoint, for an experimental period of one year, and in a personal capacity, a rapporteur on matters relating to freedom of information,

Noting that the rapporteur designated by the Council has already undertaken, in co-operation with the Secretary-General, the specialized agencies, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the professional organizations concerned, both national and international, the preparation,⁶ for submission to the Council in 1953, of a sub-

⁴ See resolution 59 (I).

⁵ See document A/AC.42/7, annex A.

⁶ See document E/2345.

stantive report covering major contemporary problems and developments in the field of freedom of information, together with recommendations regarding practical action which might be taken by the Council, in order to surmount those obstacles to the fuller enjoyment of freedom of information which can be surmounted at the present time,

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General to communicate the records of the Third Committee on the subject of freedom of information to the Economic and Social Council, in order that they may be taken into consideration by the Council during its studies and discussions;

2. *Decides* to consider further at its eighth session the problem of promoting and safeguarding freedom of information, including the draft Convention on Freedom of Information, on the basis of the rapporteur's report to the Economic and Social Council in 1953 and after the Economic and Social Council has had an opportunity to examine the rapporteur's report; and accordingly,

3. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council to submit to the General Assembly at its eighth session a statement of its views and plans regarding future work in connexion with freedom of information.

403rd plenary meeting,
16 December 1952.

632 (VII). Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press

The General Assembly,

Considering the constructive work done by the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press during its five sessions,

Considering that it has not hitherto had an opportunity to express an opinion on the work of the Sub-Commission,

1. *Decides* to express its appreciation for the work which the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press has accomplished;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to convey its thanks for the service which the Sub-Commission has honourably rendered in discharging its duties.

403rd plenary meeting,
16 December 1952.

633 (VII). Information facilities in under-developed regions of the world

The General Assembly,

Considering that it is essential for the proper development of public opinion in under-developed countries that independent domestic information enterprises should be given facilities and assistance in order that they may be enabled to contribute to the spread of information, to the development of national culture and to international understanding,

Convinced that the development of information media contributes greatly to the economic and social progress of peoples,