

11. *Urges* States parties to continue to pay active attention to the protection and promotion of civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights;

12. *Welcomes* the decision of the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1985/17 of 28 May 1985, to establish the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which will be entrusted from 1987 on with the important task of overseeing the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the Human Rights Committee informed of the relevant activities of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and also to transmit the annual reports of the Human Rights Committee to those bodies;

14. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-first session a report on the status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

15. *Again urges* the Secretary-General, taking into account the suggestions of the Human Rights Committee, to take determined steps within existing resources to give more publicity to the work of the Committee and, similarly, to the work of the Economic and Social Council and to improve administrative and related arrangements to enable them to carry out their respective functions effectively under the International Covenants on Human Rights;

16. *Welcomes* the progress already made towards the publication of the official public records of the Human Rights Committee in bound volumes and looks forward to receiving in the near future the volumes covering the first two sessions;

17. *Encourages* all Governments to publish the texts of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in as many languages as possible and to distribute them and make them known as widely as possible in their territories;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat effectively assists the Human Rights Committee and the Economic and Social Council in the implementation of their respective functions under the International Covenants on Human Rights.

*116th plenary meeting  
13 December 1985*

#### **40/116. Reporting obligations of States parties to United Nations conventions on human rights**

*The General Assembly.*

*Recalling* its resolution 37/44 of 3 December 1982, in which it noted with concern the critical situation with regard to overdue reports under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimi-

nation<sup>11</sup> and affirmed the necessity of considering that situation within the overall framework of all reporting obligations of States parties to United Nations conventions on human rights,

*Recalling also* its resolution 38/117 of 16 December 1983, in which it noted that many delays were also occurring in the submission of reports under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,<sup>7</sup> as indicated by the Secretary-General in his first report on the overall situation with regard to reporting obligations,<sup>118</sup>

*Recalling further* its resolution 39/138 of 14 December 1984, in which the General Assembly, having considered the report of the meeting of the Chairmen of the supervisory bodies entrusted with the consideration of reports submitted under United Nations conventions on human rights and of the Commission on Human Rights, held at Geneva on 16 and 17 August 1984,<sup>119</sup> expressed its concern about the problems experienced by those bodies in the functioning of the reporting procedures and its conviction of the need to improve the existing reporting system in order to resolve the problems experienced both by those bodies and by the States parties to the various conventions on human rights,

*Having considered* the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information as at 1 June 1985 on the general situation of the submission of reports of States parties to United Nations conventions on human rights<sup>120</sup> and a compilation of the general guidelines elaborated by the various human rights bodies under the human rights instruments containing reporting obligations,<sup>121</sup>

*Noting with deep concern* that the number of reports overdue from States parties to at least one of the conventions on human rights has increased seriously and may even increase further unless appropriate steps are taken to ascertain better the root causes of the situation and to devise appropriate types of action that can progressively remove the difficulties being experienced,

*Recalling*, in this respect, Commission on Human Rights resolution 1985/26 of 11 March 1985<sup>30</sup> concerning the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights,<sup>122</sup> and also resolution 1985/45 of 14 March 1985,<sup>30</sup> in which the Commission, having considered the status of the International Covenants on Human Rights,<sup>24</sup> requested the Secretary-General to consider ways and means of making advice and assistance available to States parties to these instruments in the preparation of their reports,

*Recognizing once again and with deeper concern* the burden that several coexisting reporting systems place upon Member States that are parties to various conventions, which in future may become more acute in relation to the ratification of other conventions,

*Reiterating* the importance it attaches to the fulfilment of obligations under international conventions on human rights, including reporting obligations,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the very comprehensive second report of the Secretary-General on reporting obligations of States parties to United Nations conventions on human rights, which contains:

(a) Updated information on the general situation of the submission of reports of States parties to the five conventions currently in force;

(b) Consideration of and suggestions on the question of consolidating the guidelines of the supervisory bodies

<sup>118</sup> A/38/393.

<sup>119</sup> A/39/484, annex.

<sup>120</sup> A/40/600, sect. II.

<sup>121</sup> A/40/600/Add. I, annex.

<sup>122</sup> See E/CN.4/1985/30.

entrusted with the consideration of the reports of States parties on the implementation of the conventions;

(c) A list of articles dealing with related rights under the various conventions and a compilation of the current guidelines;

2. *Expresses its deep concern* about the alarming number of reports overdue from many States parties to the international conventions on human rights,<sup>120</sup> which negatively affects the reporting systems of those conventions, in particular the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

3. *Expresses particular concern* that some States that are parties to four or to five conventions seem to have serious difficulties in submitting their reports, as indicated by the repeated reminders addressed to them by the Secretary-General at the request of the competent supervisory bodies;<sup>120</sup>

4. *Takes note with interest* of Economic and Social Council decision 1985/132 of 28 May 1985, by which, while maintaining the first six-year cycle of the reporting procedures on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Council decided to establish a nine-year period for the subsequent cycles, and considers this decision a first step towards the necessary lightening of the heavy burden of reporting obligations placed upon the States parties to that Covenant;

5. *Supports* the request addressed to the Secretary-General by the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1985/45, concerning the provision of practical assistance to States, under the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, in the preparation of their reports under United Nations conventions;

6. *Commends* the United Nations Institute for Training and Research for having organized in the Caribbean region, at the suggestion of the Centre for Human Rights and with its close co-operation, a training course on the preparation and submission of reports under international conventions on human rights, and expresses the hope that other courses of that type may be organized in Africa and Asia;

7. *Believes* that new timely steps are needed in order to ascertain better the most relevant causes of the present situation regarding the non-submission of reports and to devise feasible types of action intended to remove the difficulties being encountered;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General, to this end, to send a note verbale to all States parties to the five United Nations conventions on human rights having at 1 February 1986 more than two reports overdue, inviting them to indicate, if they so wish, the reasons for their difficulties in complying with the reporting obligations with regard to the conventions under which their reports are overdue and their interest, if any, in technical advice and assistance with a view to better fulfilling their reporting obligations;

9. *Invites* the supervisory bodies entrusted with the consideration of reports submitted under all conventions currently in force to give particular attention, during the usual consideration of the action taken by the General Assembly on their annual reports, to the report of the Secretary-General<sup>123</sup> and to the present resolution;

10. *Recommends* to the States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that, at their next meeting, they

consider suggesting to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination the adoption, as a general rule, of the practice already being followed by the Committee of considering two successive reports in one single text;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-first session a report containing updated information on the general situation with regard to overdue reports, an assessment of the operational and financial implications of increasing training activities in this field and the results of the request addressed to him in paragraph 8 above;

12. *Decides* to consider at its forty-first session the convening, in 1987, of another meeting of the Chairmen of the supervisory bodies, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, if already established, the committee against torture, in order to consider jointly the report of the Secretary-General requested in paragraph 11 above;

13. *Fully concurs* with the considerations and suggestions of the Secretary-General on the question of consolidating the guidelines of the supervisory bodies entrusted with the consideration of reports of the States parties on the implementation of the conventions on human rights;

14. *Takes note with appreciation* of the compilation of the general guidelines elaborated by the various supervisory bodies and of the list of articles dealing with related rights under the five conventions,<sup>123</sup> both of which are very helpful for States parties in the preparation of their reports;

15. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-first session a separate item entitled "Reporting obligations of States parties to the United Nations conventions on human rights".

*116th plenary meeting  
13 December 1985*

#### **40/117. Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 37/197 of 18 December 1982, 38/120 of 16 December 1983 and 39/139 of 14 December 1984 relating to the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa,

*Having considered* the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to refugees in Africa,<sup>124</sup>

*Mindful* that the fundamental purpose of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, held at Geneva from 9 to 11 July 1984,<sup>125</sup> was to launch collective action by the international community aimed at achieving lasting solutions,

*Gravely concerned* at the persistent and serious problem of large numbers of refugees on the African continent,

*Aware* of the heavy burden borne by African countries of asylum on account of the presence of these refugees and its consequences for their economic and social development, and of the heavy sacrifices made by them, despite their limited resources,

*Deeply concerned* that the refugee situation has been severely affected by the critical economic situation in Africa, as well as by drought and other natural disasters,

*Recognizing* that the efforts of the countries of asylum require the concerted support of the international commu-

<sup>123</sup> A/40/600 and Add.1.  
<sup>124</sup> A/40/425.

<sup>125</sup> A/39/402, annex