

20. *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 that Committee and, similarly, to the work of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

21. *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.

75th plenary meeting  
8 December 1988

**43/115. Reporting obligations of States parties to international instruments on human rights and effective functioning of bodies established pursuant to such instruments**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolution 42/105 of 7 December 1987, taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/42 of 27 May 1988 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1988/31 of 8 March 1988,<sup>27</sup> and recalling other relevant resolutions,

*Affirming* that the effective implementation of United Nations instruments on human rights is of major importance to the efforts made by the Organization, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>2</sup> to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Considering* that the effective functioning of treaty bodies established pursuant to international instruments on human rights is indispensable for supervising the implementation of such instruments, including the consideration of periodic reports of States parties,

*Aware* of its responsibility with respect to the proper functioning of the bodies established to carry out specific functions regarding the implementation of instruments on human rights adopted by the General Assembly,

*Reiterating* the fundamental importance that it attaches to the fulfilment of reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights,

*Recognizing* that the effective implementation of instruments on human rights, involving periodic reporting by States parties to the relevant treaty bodies and the efficient functioning of the treaty bodies themselves, not only enhances international accountability in relation to the protection and promotion of human rights but also provides States parties with a valuable opportunity to review policies and programmes affecting the protection and promotion of human rights and to make any appropriate adjustments,

*Expressing concern* about the increasing backlog of reports on implementation by States parties of United Nations instruments on human rights and about delays in consideration of reports by the treaty bodies,

*Recognizing* the burden that coexisting reporting systems place upon Member States that are parties to various instruments, as well as upon the respective treaty bodies themselves, and noting that this burden will become more onerous for the United Nations and the States parties as additional instruments come into force,

*Conscious* that, in establishing additional treaty bodies, long-term problems both in terms of enhanced reporting obligations and of financial implications should be appropriately addressed,

*Concerned* that the problem of securing sufficient financial resources may increasingly hamper the proper functioning of treaty bodies, as noted with concern in the recent reports of five treaty bodies,

*Reaffirming* the importance of providing resources for all bodies supervising the implementation of international instruments on human rights, including sufficient financial resources to ensure the effective functioning of the treaty bodies,

*Reaffirming* the independent, expert character of the treaty bodies,

*Taking note* of the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, held at Geneva from 10 to 14 October 1988,<sup>85</sup>

1. *Once again urges* States parties to international instruments on human rights with reports overdue to make every effort to present their reports as soon as possible and to take advantage of opportunities whereby such reports can be consolidated;

2. *Invites* States parties to international instruments on human rights to review the processes followed in the preparation of their periodic reports with a view to ensuring compliance with relevant guidelines, improving the quality of description and analysis and limiting reports to a reasonable length, taking due consideration of the relevant provisions of those instruments;

3. *Invites* States parties to international instruments on human rights to consider at their meetings further ways of streamlining and otherwise improving reporting procedures, as well as enhancing co-ordination and information flow between the treaty bodies and with relevant United Nations bodies, including the specialized agencies, and requests the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly of any decisions of the States parties on these issues;

4. *Welcomes* the efforts of the treaty bodies to streamline and rationalize reporting procedures, particularly by extending the periodicity of reporting, improving the efficiency of work methods and harmonizing and simplifying reporting guidelines;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consider, as a matter of priority, the finalization of the detailed reporting manual to assist States parties in the fulfilment of their reporting obligations and to allow each of the treaty bodies the opportunity to comment on the draft manual;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare, as requested by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, a report showing the extent and nature of any overlapping of issues dealt with in the international human rights treaties, with a view to reducing, as appropriate, duplication in the supervisory bodies of issues raised with respect to any given State party;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide from official United Nations sources a compilation of statistics relevant to the consideration by the treaty bodies of the reports of States parties;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to strengthen co-ordination between the Centre for Human Rights and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat with reference to the implementation of human rights treaties and the servicing of treaty bodies;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to arrange, within existing resources and taking into account the priorities of the programme of advisory services, further training courses for those countries experiencing the most serious difficulties in meeting reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights;

10. *Invites* the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies to assist the Secretary-General in the above-mentioned endeavours and to develop complementary training activities in this field;

11. *Calls upon* all States parties to fulfil without delay and in full their financial obligations under the relevant instruments on human rights;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consider ways and means of strengthening collection procedures and making them more effective;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to convey to the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-fifth session the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies together with any views and comments he may have thereon;

14. *Requests* the Commission on Human Rights, in view of its overall responsibilities in the field of human rights, to consider at its forty-fifth session, as a matter of priority, the conclusions and recommendations of that meeting, in particular those identified as matters requiring urgent action, and to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To consider entrusting, within existing resources, an independent expert with the task of preparing a study on possible long-term approaches to the supervision of new instruments on human rights, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting of persons chairing the treaty bodies, the deliberations of the Commission on Human Rights and other relevant materials, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session;

(b) To review the need for adequate staffing resources in regard to the various human rights treaty bodies;

16. *Invites* the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies to maintain communication and dialogue with each other on common issues and problems and decides to consider at its forty-fourth session the possibility of convening a meeting in 1990 of the persons chairing the treaty bodies;

17. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-fourth session, as a separate item, an item entitled "Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights".

*75th plenary meeting  
8 December 1988*

**43/116. International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolution 42/106 of 7 December 1987 on the convening of an International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa,

*Gravely concerned* about the constant deterioration of the situation in southern Africa arising from the domination and oppression of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia by the minority racist régime of South Africa,

*Having considered* the report of the Secretary-General on the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa,<sup>86</sup> held at Oslo from 22 to 24 August 1988, and the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa adopted by the Conference and contained in the annex to that report,

*Taking note with appreciation* of the active participation of His Excellency General Moussa Traoré, President of the Republic of Mali and current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency Mr. Robert Mugabe, Prime Minister of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Her Excellency Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, at the Conference,

*Aware* of the valuable contribution made by the Governments of Norway and the other Nordic countries to the successful convening of the Conference,

*Recognizing* the importance of the financial and technical assistance provided by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity in the preparation and organization of the Conference,

*Noting with satisfaction* the successful outcome of the Conference,

*Conscious* of its responsibility to provide economic, material and humanitarian assistance to independent States in southern Africa in order to assist them in coping with the situation resulting from the acts of aggression and destabilization committed by the *apartheid* régime of South Africa,

*Noting* the absence of an operational mechanism within the United Nations system dealing specifically with the problems of assistance to internally displaced persons,

*Noting with indignation* that South Africa's policy of *apartheid*, its illegal occupation of Namibia, and its direct and indirect acts of aggression, intimidation and destabilization through armed terrorists continue to be the main causes of refugee flows and increasing displacement of persons in southern Africa,

*Convinced* that there is an urgent need for the international community to extend maximum and concerted assistance to southern African countries sheltering refugees, returnees and displaced persons and also to highlight the plight of these persons,

1. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the report of the Secretary-General on the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa;

2. *Endorses* the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa adopted by the Conference;

3. *Calls upon* the international community to provide increased assistance to the countries of southern Africa to enable them to strengthen their capacity to provide the necessary facilities and services for the care and well-being

<sup>86</sup> A/43/717 and Corr.1 and Add.1.