

Reiterating that freedom of information forms an important part of the human rights and fundamental freedoms to the promotion of which the United Nations is dedicated,

Decides to take up at its twenty-third session the consideration of the item on freedom of information.

*1638th plenary meeting,
18 December 1967.*

2337 (XXII). 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

The General Assembly,

Recalling that in its resolution 2200 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 it expressed the hope that the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights would be signed and ratified or acceded to without delay and come into force at an early date,

Noting that according to the report of the Secretary-General, submitted in pursuance of resolution 2200 A (XXI) on the status of ratifications of the Covenants and of the Optional Protocol,⁹ there have been no ratifications of or accessions to any of these instruments and that there have been only nineteen signatures to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, eighteen to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and eleven to the Optional Protocol,

Desiring to accelerate the ratifications of and accessions to the Covenants and the Optional Protocol,

Convinced that the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations would be greatly enhanced by the coming into force of the Covenants and the Optional Protocol,

1. *Invites* States which are eligible to become parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to hasten their ratifications of or accessions to these instruments;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the status of the Covenants and the Optional Protocol to the International Conference on Human Rights to be held at Teheran in 1968 and to the General Assembly at its twenty-third session;

3. *Decides* to include this item in the provisional agenda of its twenty-third session.

*1638th plenary meeting,
18 December 1967.*

2338 (XXII). Question of the punishment of war criminals and of persons who have committed crimes against humanity

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3 (I) of 13 February 1946 and 170 (II) of 31 October 1947 on the extradition and punishment of war criminals, resolution 95 (I) of 11 December 1946 affirming the principles of inter-

⁹ A/6820 and Add.1. See also *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-second Session, Third Committee, 1553rd meeting, para. 53.*

national law recognized by the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal and the judgement of the Tribunal, and resolutions 2184 (XXI) of 12 December 1966 and 2202 (XXI) of 16 December 1966, which expressly condemned as crimes against humanity the violation of the economic and political rights of the indigenous population, on the one hand, and the policies of apartheid, on the other,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 1074 D (XXXIX) of 28 July 1965 and 1158 (XLI) of 5 August 1966 on the punishment of war criminals and of persons who have committed crimes against humanity,

Noting that none of the solemn declarations, instruments or conventions relating to prosecution and punishment for war crimes and crimes against humanity makes provision for a period of limitation,

Considering that war crimes and crimes against humanity are among the gravest crimes in international law,

Convinced that effective punishment for war crimes and crimes against humanity is an important element in the prevention of such crimes, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the encouragement of confidence, the furtherance of co-operation among peoples and the promotion of international peace and security,

Noting that the application to war crimes and crimes against humanity of the rules of municipal law relating to the period of limitation for ordinary crimes is a matter of serious concern to world public opinion, since it prevents the prosecution and punishment of persons responsible for those crimes,

Recognizing that it is necessary and timely to affirm in international law, through a convention, the principle that there is no period of limitation for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and to secure its universal application,

Having considered the report of the joint working group of the Third and Sixth Committees on the draft convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitation to war crimes and crimes against humanity,¹⁰

Expressing its regret that owing to the lack of time it has not been possible to complete consideration of and to adopt the convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitation to war crimes and crimes against humanity,

1. *Expresses its thanks* to the joint working group of the Third and Sixth Committee for the work it has accomplished;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the joint working group;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit to Member States the report of the joint working group containing the text of the draft convention adopted by the group and to invite them to submit comments on the draft convention;

4. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to issue to Member States, before the twenty-third session of

¹⁰ The joint working group was established, for the twenty-second session, following consultations between the Chairman of the Third Committee and the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, in accordance with the recommendation adopted by the General Assembly at its 1564th plenary meeting, on 23 September 1967. For the report of the joint working group, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-second Session, Annexes, agenda item 60, document A/C.3/L.1503.*