

45/99. Development of public information activities in the field of human rights

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming that activities to improve public knowledge in the field of human rights are essential to the fulfilment of the purposes of the United Nations set out in Article 1, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations and that carefully designed programmes of teaching, education and information are essential to the achievement of lasting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recalling the resolutions adopted on this subject, in particular its resolutions 43/128 of 8 December 1988 and 44/61 of 8 December 1989, and taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1990/73 of 7 March 1990,³

Recognizing the catalytic effect of initiatives of the United Nations on national and regional public information activities in the field of human rights,

Recognizing also the valuable role that non-governmental organizations can play in those endeavours,

Recognizing further that the eradication of illiteracy will further the promotion and protection of human rights,

Believing that the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights is a valuable complement to the activities of the United Nations further to promote and to protect human rights world-wide,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the development of the public information activities in the field of human rights;⁴⁶

2. *Reaffirms* the need for information materials on human rights to be carefully designed in clear and accessible form, to be tailored to regional and national requirements and circumstances with specific target audiences in mind and to be effectively disseminated in national and local languages and in sufficient volume to have the desired impact, and for effective use also to be made of the mass media, in particular radio and television and audio-visual technologies, in order to reach wider audiences, with priority being given to children, other young people and the disadvantaged, including those in isolated areas;

3. *Urges* the Secretariat to take measures to ensure the further production and effective dissemination of human rights information materials, especially those on the basic United Nations human rights instruments and institutions, in national and local languages, in co-operation with regional, national and local organizations as well as with Governments, making full and effective use of the United Nations information centres;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to produce audio-visual materials on human rights issues which could be used as effective tools of information within the framework of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights and which would be made available at United Nations information centres and United Nations offices world-wide and to report on the progress made to the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-seventh session;

5. *Encourages* the efforts of the Secretariat to establish, within available resources, the collection of basic United Nations information and reference material on human rights and fundamental freedoms at each United Nations information centre;

6. *Encourages* all Member States to make special efforts to provide, facilitate and encourage publicity for the activities of the United Nations in the field of human rights and to accord priority to the dissemination, in their respective national and local languages, of the texts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁵ the International Covenants on Human Rights³³ and other international conventions, as well as to information and education on the practical ways in which the rights and freedoms enjoyed under those instruments can be exercised;

7. *Urges* all Member States to include in their educational curricula materials relevant to a comprehensive understanding of human rights issues, and encourages all those responsible for training in law and its enforcement, the armed forces, medicine, diplomacy and other relevant fields to include appropriate human rights components in their programmes;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to draw the attention of Member States to the teaching booklet on human rights, which could serve as a broad and flexible framework adaptable to national circumstances for the structuring and development of the teaching of human rights;

9. *Notes* the special value, under the advisory services and technical assistance programme, of regional and national training courses and workshops, in co-operation with Governments, regional and national organizations and non-governmental organizations, in promoting practical education and awareness in the field of human rights;

10. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the fullest effective deployment of the skills and resources of all concerned units of the Secretariat and to make available, within existing resources, and in particular from the budget of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, adequate funding for developing practical and effective human rights information activities, including those within the programme of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights;

11. *Calls upon* the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, which has primary responsibility within the United Nations system in the field of human rights, to co-ordinate the substantive activities of the World Campaign pursuant to the direction of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, and to serve as liaison with Governments, regional and national institutions, non-governmental organizations and concerned individuals in the development and implementation of the activities of the World Campaign;

12. *Calls upon* the Department of Public Information, which has primary responsibility for public information activities, to co-ordinate the public information activities of the World Campaign and, in its responsibility as secretariat to the Joint United Nations Information Committee, to promote co-ordinated system-wide information activities in the field of human rights;

⁴⁶ A/45/590.

13. *Stresses* the need for close co-operation between the Centre for Human Rights and the Department of Public Information, *inter alia*, in the implementation of the aims established for the World Campaign and the need for the United Nations to harmonize its activities in the field of human rights with those of other organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, with regard to the dissemination of information on international humanitarian law, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with regard to education for human rights;

14. *Requests* the Secretariat, in the implementation of the World Campaign, to take advantage, as much as possible, of the collaboration of non-governmental organizations for, *inter alia*, the dissemination of human rights materials, with a view to increasing universal awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

15. *Requests* the Commission on Human Rights, at its forty-seventh session, on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General, to give priority consideration to this question with a view to providing appropriate guidance on the aims and activities of the World Campaign;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution for consideration under the item entitled "Alternative approaches and ways and means within the United Nations system for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

68th plenary meeting
14 December 1990

45/100. Humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 43/131 of 8 December 1988,

Recalling that one of the principles of the United Nations is to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion,

Reaffirming the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States, and recognizing that it is up to each State first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations occurring on its territory,

Deeply concerned about the suffering of the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, the loss in human lives, the destruction of property and the mass displacement of populations that results from them,

Concerned about the fate of persons who, following such displacement, are in an extremely precarious situation, particularly in a country other than that of which they are nationals,

Considering that the abandonment of the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations with-

out humanitarian assistance constitutes a threat to human life and an offence to human dignity,

Strongly desiring that the international community should respond speedily and effectively to the needs for emergency humanitarian assistance expressed in particular through the Secretary-General,

Concerned about the difficulties and obstacles that victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations may encounter in receiving humanitarian assistance,

Convinced that, in providing humanitarian assistance, in particular the supply of food, medicines or health care, for which access to victims is essential, rapid relief will avoid a tragic increase in the number of victims,

Recalling, in this regard, the Cairo Declaration⁴⁷ adopted by the World Food Council at its fifteenth session, proposing, *inter alia*, an international agreement on the transport of emergency food aid,

Aware that alongside the action of Governments and intergovernmental organizations, the speed and efficiency of this assistance often depend on the help and aid of local and non-governmental organizations working in an impartial manner and with strictly humanitarian motives,

Reaffirming the need for the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with humanitarian assistance to co-operate as closely as possible with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator or any *ad hoc* mechanism set up by the Secretary-General in the co-ordination of aid,

Concerned about the effectiveness of such assistance, which requires an accurate evaluation of needs, efficient preparation of actions and effective co-ordination in conducting them,

Recalling that, in the event of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality must be given utmost consideration by all those involved in providing humanitarian assistance,

1. *Reaffirms* the cardinal importance of humanitarian assistance for the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations;

2. *Reaffirms also* the sovereignty of affected States and their primary role in the initiation, organization, co-ordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within their respective territories;

3. *Stresses* the important contribution made in providing humanitarian assistance by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations working impartially and with strictly humanitarian motives;

4. *Invites* all States whose populations are in need of such assistance to facilitate the work of these organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, in particular the supply of food, medicines and health care, for which access to victims is essential;

5. *Appeals*, therefore, to all States to give their support to these organizations working to provide humanitarian assistance, where needed, to the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations;

⁴⁷ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/44/19)*, part one.