

1989/81. International Covenants on Human Rights

The Economic and Social Council.

Bearing in mind its important responsibilities in relation to the co-ordination of activities to promote the International Covenants on Human Rights.⁸¹

Mindful that the International Covenants on Human Rights constitute the first all-embracing and legally binding international treaties in the field of human rights and, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹⁰⁶ form the core of the International Bill of Human Rights.

Recalling the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,¹⁰⁷ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,¹⁰⁷ and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and reaffirming that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interrelated and that the promotion and protection of one category of rights should never exempt or excuse States from the promotion and protection of the other rights.

Recognizing the important role of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in promoting and implementing the International Covenants on Human Rights,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its third session,¹³⁷ as well as the general comments of the Human Rights Committee on article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the Committee at its thirty-fifth session,¹³⁸

Emphasizing the importance of General Assembly resolution 43/128 of 8 December 1988, by which the Assembly decided to launch a World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights,

Convinced of the continuing need to promote the universal observance and enjoyment of human rights, which contributes to peaceful and friendly relations among nations,

1. *Reaffirms* the central importance of the International Covenants on Human Rights in international efforts to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and recognizes these instruments as a basis for any standard setting and codification in the field of human rights, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 41/120 of 4 December 1986;

2. *Appeals strongly* to all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to consider acceding to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and

Political Rights, so that those instruments may acquire genuine universality:

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of the strictest compliance by States parties to the Covenants with their obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and, where applicable, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

4. *Invites* the States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to consider making the declaration provided for in article 41 of the Covenant;

5. *Stresses* the importance of avoiding the erosion of human rights by derogation, and the necessity for strict observance of all the agreed conditions and procedures for derogation, under article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

6. *Reaffirms* the important role of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with respect to the implementation by States parties of the International Covenants on Human Rights, and expresses its satisfaction with the serious and constructive manner in which those Committees are carrying out their functions;

7. *Welcomes* the general comments of the Human Rights Committee on article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;¹³⁸

8. *Also welcomes* the decision of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to consider articles 22 and 23 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as to continue to focus on article 11, with a view to developing general comments at its fourth session, so as to encourage States parties to the Covenant to take appropriate steps to ensure the implementation of that article;

9. *Further welcomes* the relevant activities of the Commission on Human Rights in the field of effective implementation of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, and the promotion of universal adherence to the International Covenants on Human Rights;

10. *Urges* the Secretary-General, in conjunction with the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights, to publicize the work of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and to ensure sufficient administrative and related support of their meetings and activities to enable them to carry out their respective functions effectively;

11. *Encourages* all Governments to publicize 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;

¹⁰⁶E/CN.4/1989/45.

¹³⁷Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989 Supplement No. 4 (E/1989/22)

¹³⁸E/1989/57, annex

12. *Decides* to include in the agenda of its first regular session of 1990 an item entitled "International Covenants on Human Rights" and to consider under that item the general comments of the Human Rights Committee and the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its fourth session;

13. *Also decides* to transmit the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its third session to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session for consideration under the agenda item entitled "International Covenants on Human Rights".

*16th plenary meeting
24 May 1989*

¹³⁹E/1989/53, annex

¹⁴⁰E/1989/49

¹⁴¹E/1989/42 and Add. 1-4.