

1992/11. International Covenants on Human Rights

The Economic and Social Council.

Bearing in mind its important responsibilities in relation to the coordination of activities to promote the International Covenants on Human Rights,¹⁷

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,¹⁸ form the core of the International Bill of Human Rights,

Recalling the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,¹⁷ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights¹⁷ and the Optional Protocols to the latter¹⁹ 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,

Noting the entry into force on 11 July 1991 of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty,²⁰

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 sixth session,²¹ as well as the general and country-specific comments of the Human Rights Committee,

Noting, in this regard, that a number of States Members of the United Nations have yet to become parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights,

Considering that the effective functioning of treaty bodies established in accordance with the relevant provisions of international instruments on human rights plays a fundamental role and hence represents an important continuing concern of the United Nations,

Welcoming the conclusions and recommendations of the meetings of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies aimed at streamlining, rationalizing and otherwise improving reporting procedures, as well as the continuing efforts in this connection by the treaty bodies and the Secretary-General within their respective spheres of competence,

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of the International Covenants on Human Rights as major parts of the international effort to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

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 first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as to the Second Optional Protocol, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;

3. *Again 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;

4. *Appeals* to States parties to the Covenants that have exercised their sovereign right to make reservations in accordance with relevant rules of international law to consider whether any such reservations should be reviewed;

5. *Invites* the Secretary-General to intensify the systematic efforts to encourage States to become parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights and, through the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, to provide technical assistance to the States that are not parties to the Covenants, with a view to assisting them in ratifying or acceding to the Covenants;

6. *Emphasizes* the importance of the strictest compliance by States parties 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 Protocols to the latter;

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

8. *Welcomes* the continuing efforts of the Human Rights Committee to strive for uniform standards in the implementation of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and appeals to other bodies dealing with similar questions of human rights to respect those standards as expressed in the general comments of the Human Rights Committee;

9. *Also welcomes* the adoption by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of a general comment at its third,²² fourth²³ and fifth²⁴ sessions, and encourages the Committee to continue using that mechanism to develop a fuller appreciation of the obligations of States parties under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

10. *Further welcomes* the fact that the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its general comment on article 11, paragraph 1, of the Covenant, adopted at its sixth session,²⁵ dealt with the right to adequate housing;

11. *Invites* States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in conformity with article 2, paragraph 1, of the Covenant, to consider identifying benchmarks to measure achievements in the progressive realization of the rights recognized in the Covenant and, in that context, to pay particular regard to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the Human

Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights informed of the relevant activities of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Human Rights, the other functional commissions concerned, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the other treaty bodies and, as appropriate, the specialized agencies, and also to transmit the annual reports of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to those bodies;

13. *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 Protocols to the latter, in all appropriate languages, and to distribute them and make them known as widely as possible in their territories;

14. *Invites* States parties to the Covenants to consider the general comments adopted by the Human Rights Committee and the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

15. *Decides* to transmit the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session for consideration under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

*32nd plenary meeting
20 July 1992*