

11. *Urges* all States parties to the Convention to notify the Secretary-General of their acceptance of the amendments to articles 17 and 18 of the Convention as soon as possible;

12. *Encourages* the open-ended working group of the Commission on Human Rights on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention to intensify its deliberations with a view to an early conclusion of its work;

13. *Expresses its gratitude and appreciation* to the Governments, organizations and individuals that have already contributed to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture;

14. *Appeals* to all Governments, organizations and individuals in a position to do so to respond favourably to requests for contributions to the Fund, if possible on a regular basis and annually before the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Fund and if possible also with a substantial increase in the level of contributions, so that consideration may be given to the ever-increasing demand for assistance;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit to all Governments the appeals of the General Assembly for contributions to the Fund;

16. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to include the Fund on an annual basis among the programmes for which funds are pledged at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities;

17. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Board of Trustees of the Fund for the work it has accomplished;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to assist the Board of Trustees of the Fund in its appeal for contributions and its efforts to make better known the existence of the Fund and the financial means currently available to it, as well as in its assessment of the global need for international funding of rehabilitation services for torture victims and, in this effort, to make use of all existing possibilities, including the preparation, production and dissemination of information materials;

19. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the provision of adequate staff and facilities for the bodies and mechanisms that combat torture, corresponding to the strong support expressed by Member States for combating torture;

20. *Invites* donor countries and recipient countries that so agree to consider including in their bilateral programmes and projects relating to the training of armed forces and police personnel, as well as health-care personnel, matters relating to the protection of human rights and the prevention of torture;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-third session and to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session a report on the status of the Convention as well as a report on the operations of the Fund;

22. *Decides* to consider the reports of the Secretary-General and the Committee against Torture at its fifty-third

session under the sub-item entitled "Implementation of human rights instruments".

82nd plenary meeting
12 December 1996

51/87. Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 50/170 of 22 December 1995, as well as other relevant resolutions,

Recalling also the relevant paragraphs of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,¹⁹⁶

Reaffirming that the full and effective implementation of United Nations human rights instruments is of major importance to the efforts of the Organization, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹⁹⁷ to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Considering that the effective functioning of the treaty bodies established pursuant to United Nations human rights instruments is indispensable for the full and effective implementation of such instruments,

Conscious of the importance of the coordination of the human rights promotion and protection activities of the United Nations bodies active in the field of human rights,

Noting with appreciation the initiatives taken by a number of treaty bodies to elaborate early-warning measures and urgent procedures, within their mandates, with a view to preventing the occurrence, or reoccurrence, of serious human rights violations,

Expressing concern that the underresourcing of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat is one impediment to the treaty bodies in their ability to carry out their mandates effectively,

Reaffirming its responsibility to ensure the effective functioning of treaty bodies, and reaffirming also the importance of:

(a) Ensuring the effective functioning of the periodic reporting by States parties to these instruments;

(b) Securing sufficient financial, human and information resources to overcome existing difficulties with their effective functioning;

(c) Promoting greater efficiency and effectiveness through better coordination of the activities of the United

¹⁹⁶ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

¹⁹⁷ Resolution 217 A (III).

Nations bodies active in the field of human rights, taking into account the need to avoid unnecessary duplication and overlapping of their mandates and tasks;

(d) Addressing questions of both reporting obligations and financial implications whenever elaborating any further instruments on human rights,

*Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,*¹⁹⁸

1. *Welcomes* the report of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies on their seventh meeting, held at Geneva from 16 to 20 September 1996,¹⁹⁹ and takes note of their conclusions and recommendations;

2. *Encourages* greater efforts to identify measures for more effective implementation of the United Nations human rights instruments;

3. *Emphasizes* the need to ensure financing and adequate staff and information resources for the operations of the treaty bodies, and with this in mind:

(a) Reiterates its request that the Secretary-General provide adequate resources in respect of each treaty body;

(b) Calls upon the Secretary-General to make the most efficient use of existing resources and to seek the resources necessary to give the treaty bodies adequate administrative support, access to technical expertise and access to appropriate databases and on-line information services;

(c) Requests that the Secretary-General report on this question to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-third session and to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session;

4. *Welcomes* the continuing efforts by the treaty bodies and the Secretary-General aimed at streamlining, rationalizing, rendering more transparent and otherwise improving reporting procedures, and urges the treaty bodies and the meetings of persons chairing the treaty bodies to continue to examine ways of reducing the duplication of reporting required under the different instruments, without impairing the quality of reporting, and of generally reducing the reporting burden on Member States;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare a detailed analytical study comparing the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,²⁰⁰ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,²⁰⁰ the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,²⁰¹ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,²⁰² the Convention on the Rights of the Child²⁰³ and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading

Treatment or Punishment,²⁰⁴ with a view to identifying duplication of reporting required under these instruments;

6. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in accordance with his mandate, to encourage the independent expert to finalize his interim report on possible long-term approaches to enhancing the effective operation of the human rights treaty system²⁰⁵ in time for the final report to be considered by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-third session, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/120 of 20 December 1993;

7. *Urges* States parties to contribute, individually and through meetings of States parties, to identifying and implementing ways of further streamlining, rationalizing, avoiding duplication in and otherwise improving reporting procedures;

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

9. *Also expresses concern* about the large number of overdue reports under the United Nations instruments on human rights, and again urges States parties to make every effort to meet their reporting obligations;

10. *Invites* States parties that have been unable to comply with the requirements to submit their initial report to avail themselves of technical assistance;

11. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that the revised *Manual on Human Rights Reporting* is available in all official languages at the earliest opportunity;

12. *Encourages* the efforts of the treaty bodies to examine the progress made in achieving the fulfilment of human rights treaty undertakings by all States parties, without exception;

13. *Urges* States parties to address, as a matter of priority, at their next scheduled meetings, the issue of States parties consistently not complying with their reporting obligations;

14. *Urges* all States parties whose reports have been examined by treaty bodies to provide adequate follow-up to the observations and final comments of the treaty bodies on their reports;

15. *Encourages* the treaty bodies to continue to identify specific possibilities for technical assistance, to be provided at the request of the State concerned, in the regular course of their work of reviewing the periodic reports of States parties;

16. *Welcomes* the recommendation by the meeting of persons chairing the treaty bodies that treaty bodies urge each

¹⁹⁸ A/51/425.

¹⁹⁹ A/51/482, annex.

²⁰⁰ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

²⁰¹ Resolution 2106 A (XX), annex.

²⁰² Resolution 34/180, annex.

²⁰³ Resolution 44/25, annex.

²⁰⁴ Resolution 39/46, annex.

²⁰⁵ A/CONF.157/PC/62/Add.11/Rev.1.

State party to translate, publish and make widely available in its territory the full text of the concluding observations on its reports to the treaty bodies, and requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to make every effort to ensure that recent reports and the summary records of committee discussions pertaining to them, as well as concluding observations and final comments of the treaty bodies, are made available in the United Nations information centres in the countries submitting those reports;

17. *Also welcomes* the contribution to the work of the treaty bodies made by the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies, and invites the specialized agencies, other United Nations bodies and the treaty bodies to continue to pursue further cooperation between them;

18. *Further welcomes* the recommendation of the persons chairing the treaty bodies that efforts continue to be made to enhance coordination and cooperation between the treaty bodies and the special rapporteurs, representatives, experts and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities;²⁰⁶

19. *Recognizes* the important role played by non-governmental organizations in the effective implementation of all human rights instruments, and encourages the exchange of information between the treaty bodies and such organizations;

20. *Recalls*, with regard to the election of the members of the treaty bodies, the importance of giving consideration to equitable geographic distribution of membership and to the representation of the principal legal systems and of bearing in mind that the members shall be elected and shall serve in their personal capacity and be of high moral character and recognized competence in the field of human rights;

21. *Encourages* the Economic and Social Council, as well as its functional commissions and their subsidiary bodies, and other United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies to consider the feasibility of participation by representatives of the treaty bodies in their meetings;

22. *Welcomes* the continuing emphasis by the persons chairing the treaty bodies that the enjoyment of the human rights of women should be monitored closely by each treaty body within the purview of its mandate, and in this regard endorses the recommendation by the meeting of the persons chairing the treaty bodies that each treaty body should continue to consider how it might most effectively incorporate gender perspectives in its work practices;²⁰⁷

23. *Also welcomes* all appropriate measures the treaty bodies may take, within their mandates, in response to situations of massive human rights violations, including bringing those violations to the attention of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Secretary-General and the competent bodies of the United Nations in the field of

human rights, and requests the High Commissioner, acting within his mandate, to coordinate and consult throughout the United Nations system in this regard;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on measures taken to implement the present resolution and on obstacles to its implementation;

25. *Decides* to continue giving priority consideration, at its fifty-second session, to the conclusions and recommendations of the meetings of persons chairing treaty bodies, in the light of the deliberations of the Commission on Human Rights, under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

82nd plenary meeting
12 December 1996

51/88. Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling that, in adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights²⁰⁸ on 10 December 1948, it recognized the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Considering that the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration provides an opportunity for the United Nations and its Member States to redouble their efforts to promote awareness and strengthened observance of the rights set out in the Declaration,

Recognizing the Declaration as the source of inspiration and the basis of subsequent progress in the field of human rights,

Concerned that international human rights standards are not fully and universally respected, that human rights continue to be violated in all parts of the world and that people still suffer misery and are deprived of the full enjoyment of their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, and convinced of the necessity to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms in all situations and to strengthen United Nations efforts in this regard,

Recalling the significance and the message of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,²⁰⁹

Recalling also its decision 48/416 of 10 December 1993, in which it decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session an item entitled "Fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights",

²⁰⁶ A/51/482, annex, para. 53.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., para. 60.

²⁰⁸ Resolution 217 A (III).

²⁰⁹ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.