

southern African countries sheltering refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

*Welcoming with appreciation* the ongoing activities of the High Commissioner for the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of South African returnees, and hoping that the obstacles to the return of all refugees and exiles in conditions of safety and dignity will be removed without delay,

*Recognizing* the need to integrate refugee-related development projects in local and national development plans,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General<sup>127</sup> and that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;<sup>116</sup>

2. *Commends* the Governments concerned for their sacrifices, for providing assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and for their efforts to promote voluntary repatriation and other measures taken in order to find appropriate and lasting solutions;

3. *Expresses deep concern* at the serious and far-reaching consequences of the presence of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the countries concerned and the implications for the security environment and their long-term socio-economic development;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner, the specialized agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, donor countries and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their assistance in mitigating the plight of the large number of refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

5. *Expresses the hope* that additional resources will be made available for general refugee programmes to keep pace with refugee needs;

6. *Appeals* to Member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide adequate and sufficient financial, material and technical assistance for relief and rehabilitation programmes for the large number of refugees, voluntary returnees and displaced persons and victims of natural disasters and to the affected countries;

7. *Requests* all Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to pay particular attention to the protection of special needs of refugee women and children;

8. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and United Nations humanitarian agencies to continue their efforts to mobilize humanitarian assistance for the relief, repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, including those refugees in urban areas;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize adequate financial and material assistance for the full implementation of ongoing projects in rural and urban areas affected by the presence of refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

10. *Requests* the High Commissioner to continue her efforts with the appropriate United Nations agencies, the Organization of African Unity and intergovernmental, governmental and non-

governmental organizations in order to consolidate and increase essential services to refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

11. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive and consolidated report on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, under the item entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons, and humanitarian questions", and an oral report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994.

*85th plenary meeting  
20 December 1993*

#### 48/119. International covenants on human rights

*The General Assembly.*

*Recalling* its resolution 46/113 of 17 December 1991, and taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/15 of 26 February 1993,<sup>33</sup>

*Mindful* that the International Covenants on Human Rights<sup>19</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> form the core of the International Bill of Human Rights,

*Taking note* of the report of the Secretary-General<sup>131</sup> on the status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

*Welcoming* the fact that the total number of States parties to each of the Covenants has increased significantly through recent ratifications or accessions, while noting at the same time that many States Members of the United Nations have yet to become parties to them or to the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

*Recalling* the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>34</sup> and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>34</sup> 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 in the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols thereto,<sup>132</sup>

*Also recognizing* the important role of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

*Welcoming* the submission to the General Assembly of the annual report of the Human Rights Committee<sup>133</sup> and the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its seventh session,<sup>134</sup>

*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.

*Noting with satisfaction* the ongoing efforts of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to improve their methods of work,

*Noting with concern* the critical situation with regard to overdue reports from States parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights,

*Bearing in mind* the successful conclusion of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, and the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,<sup>6</sup> and taking into account in particular the call for strengthening and further implementation of the human rights instruments,

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

2. *Once again urges* 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 Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

3. *Welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General to intensify systematic efforts to encourage States to become parties to the Covenants and, through the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, to assist such States, at their request, in ratifying or acceding to the Covenants;

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

6. *Stresses* the importance of avoiding the erosion of human rights by derogation, and underlines the necessity of strict observance of the agreed conditions and procedures for derogation under article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, bearing in mind the need for States parties to provide the fullest possible information during states of emergency, so that the justification for and appropriateness of measures taken in these circumstances can be assessed;

7. *Also stresses* the importance of taking fully into account the specific needs and situation of women in the implementation of the Covenants at the national level, particularly in the national reports, and in the work of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

8. *Encourages* States to consider limiting the extent of any reservations they lodge to the International Covenants on Human Rights, to formulate any reservations as precisely and narrowly as possible and to ensure that no reservation is incompatible with the object and purpose of the relevant treaty or is otherwise contrary to international law;

9. *Encourages* the States parties to review regularly any reservations made in respect of the provisions of the International Covenants on Human Rights with a view to withdrawing them;

10. *Takes note with appreciation* of the annual reports of the Human Rights Committee submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh<sup>135</sup> and forty-eighth<sup>133</sup> sessions;

11. *Also takes note with appreciation* of the reports of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its sixth<sup>136</sup> and seventh<sup>134</sup> sessions;

12. *Expresses its satisfaction* with the serious and constructive manner in which both Committees are carrying out their function;

13. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Committees to further improve their working methods, in particular by adopting concluding observations containing specific suggestions and recommendations concerning steps States parties could take to implement the Covenants more effectively;

14. *Invites* the Committees to identify specific needs of States parties that might be addressed through the advisory services and technical assistance programme of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, with the possible participation of members of the Committees where appropriate;

15. *Encourages* the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to consider further innovations in their working methods, in particular aiming at the prevention of serious human rights violations in their respective fields of competence and the promotion of peaceful solutions;

16. *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 human rights questions to respect these uniform standards, as expressed in the general comments of the Human Rights Committee;

17. *Also welcomes* the efforts of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the preparation of general comments on the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

18. *Urges* States parties to fulfil in good time such reporting obligations under the International Covenants on Human Rights as may be requested;

19. *Urges* States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the specialized agencies and other relevant United Nations bodies to extend their full support and cooperation to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

20. *Also urges* States parties to take duly into account, in implementing the provisions of the Covenants, the observations made at the conclusion of the consideration of their reports by the Human Rights Committee and by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

21. *Invites* States parties to give particular attention to the dissemination at the national level of the reports they have submitted to the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the summary records relating to the examination of those reports by the Committees;

22. *Encourages* all Governments to publish 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 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in as many local languages as possible and to distribute them and make them known as widely as possible in their territories;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consider ways and means of assisting States parties to the Covenants in the preparation of their reports, including seminars or workshops at the national level for the purpose of training government officials engaged in the preparation of such reports, and the exploration of other possibilities available under the regular programme of advisory services in the field of human rights;

24. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,<sup>137</sup> to make appropriate arrangements for additional resources from within the regular budget to be provided to the Human Rights Committee for dealing in an effective and timely manner with the increasing workload under the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>132</sup>

25. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat effectively assists the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the implementation of their respective mandates;

26. *Once again urges* the Secretary-General, taking into account the suggestions of the Human Rights Committee, to take determined steps to give more publicity to the work of that Committee and, similarly, to the work of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, under the item entitled "Human rights questions", a report on the status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including all reservations and declarations.

85th plenary meeting  
20 December 1993

**48/120. Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolution 47/111 of 16 December 1992, as well as other relevant resolutions,

*Reaffirming* that the 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,<sup>3</sup> to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Reaffirming its responsibility* to ensure the proper functioning of treaty bodies established pursuant to instruments adopted by the General Assembly and, in this connection, further reaffirming the importance of:

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

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

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

*Recalling* the conclusions and recommendations of the second meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, held at Geneva in October 1988,<sup>138</sup> and the endorsement of the recommendations aimed at streamlining, rationalizing and otherwise improving reporting procedures by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/111 and the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1993/16 of 26 February 1993,<sup>33</sup>

*Noting* the meeting, within the framework of the World Conference on Human Rights, of persons chairing treaty bodies together with those persons chairing each of the principal regional and other human rights bodies,<sup>139</sup>

*Recalling in particular* the conclusions and recommendations of the third and fourth meetings of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, held at Geneva in October 1990,<sup>140</sup> and in October 1992,<sup>141</sup> respectively,

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

*Taking note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on progress achieved in enhancing the effective functioning of the treaty bodies,<sup>142</sup>

*Taking note also* of the relevant paragraphs of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action<sup>6</sup> adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, held from 14 to 25 June 1993,

*Welcoming* the interim report<sup>143</sup> of the updated study by the independent expert on possible long-term approaches to enhancing the effective operation of the human rights treaty system,

1. *Endorses* 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;

2. *Takes notes with satisfaction* of the interim report of the updated study by the independent expert on possible long-term