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## REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Italy, United States  
of America and Zaire: draft resolution

Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of  
periodic and genuine elections

The General Assembly,

Aware of its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <sup>1/</sup> which provides that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, that everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his or her country, that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government, and that this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures,

Noting that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights <sup>2/</sup> provides that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, to

<sup>1/</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>2/</sup> See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors, and to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his or her country,

Recalling that all States enjoy sovereign equality and that each State has the right freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic, and cultural systems,

1. Underscores the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which establish that the authority to govern shall be based on the will of the people, as expressed in periodic and genuine elections;

2. Stresses its conviction that periodic and genuine elections are a necessary and indispensable element of sustained efforts to protect the rights and interests of the governed from actual or potential abuses, and that, as a matter of practical experience, the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country is a crucial factor in the effective enjoyment by all of a wide range of other human rights and fundamental freedoms, including political, economic, social, and cultural rights;

3. Declares that determining the will of the people requires an electoral process which accommodates distinct alternatives, and that this process should provide an equal opportunity for all citizens to become candidates and put forward their political views, individually and in co-operation with others;

4. Calls upon the Commission on Human Rights, at its forty-fifth session, to consider appropriate ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections, in the context of full respect for the sovereignty of Member States, and to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council;

5. Decides to include in the agenda of its forty-fourth session the item entitled "Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections".

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