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FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF  
A LONG-TERM PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION

Discussions and recommendations of the World Food Conference,  
the World Population Conference and the United Nations  
Conference on the Human Environment relating to the various  
aspects of implementation of human rights

Report prepared by the Secretary-General under paragraph 3(c)  
of Commission resolution 10 (XXXI)

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## INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 3 (c) of its resolution 10 (XXXI), the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General, taking into account the need for establishing a unified long-term programme of work in the field of human rights, to submit to it at its thirty-second session, inter alia, a report on the discussions and recommendations of the World Food Conference, the World Population Conference and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment relating to the various aspects of implementation of human rights.

2. The present report is being submitted in accordance with this request of the Commission on Human Rights. It has been found advisable to follow a chronological order, dealing successively with the Conference on the Human Environment, the World Population Conference, and the World Food Conference, as the latter conferences have to some extent taken into account the work of the earlier conference. The Secretary-General has understood the words "relating to the various aspects of implementation of human rights" in a broad sense, as referring to all aspects, not merely the institutional aspects, of implementation and as embracing all human rights - economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political. The quotations of, and references to, various texts adopted by the conferences are purely illustrative in character.

I. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT RELATING TO THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF  
IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

3. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held at Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972 at the call of the United Nations General Assembly which, in resolution 2581 (XXIV), declared as the Conference's main purpose, "to serve as a practical means to encourage, and to provide guidelines for, action by Governments and international organizations designed to protect and improve the human environment and to remedy and prevent its impairment, by means of international co-operation, bearing in mind the particular importance of enabling developing countries to forestall the occurrence of such problems".

4. Representatives of 113 States and numerous other organizations and agencies participated in this Conference, 1/ at which extensive debates took place on the whole range of issues affecting the human environment. 2/

5. The Conference adopted a Declaration, which laid down the principles needed "to inspire and guide the peoples of the world in the preservation and enhancement of the human environment". The Conference also adopted an Action Plan for the Human Environment, which dealt with three broad types of action: Earthwatch, the global environmental assessment programme; environmental management, a programme of goal setting, planning and international consultation and agreements; and finally, to support the programmes of environmental assessment and management, a series of international measures in the fields of education, training, public information and technical co-operation. 3/

6. A resolution was also adopted recommending the creation of international institutions and the establishment of a voluntary international fund to deal with environmental problems. 4/

A. The human dimension of environment problems

7. In its Declaration, the Conference on the Human Environment proclaimed certain basic guiding principles in environmental matters. According to the Declaration, "Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being". 5/ He is both creature and moulder of his environment, which gives him physical sustenance and affords him the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth. Both aspects of man's environment, the natural and

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1/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.73.II.A.14), chapter VII, paragraphs 13-17.

2/ Ibid., chap. VIII, paras. 33-64.

3/ Ibid., chaps. I and II.

4/ Ibid., chap. III.

5/ Ibid., chap. I, principle 1.

the man-made, are essential to his well-being and "to the enjoyment of basic human rights - even the right to life itself". 6/ Man therefore bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations. 7/

8. The Declaration stressed, however, growing evidence of man-made harm in many regions of the earth: dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; major and undesirable disturbances to the ecological balance of the biosphere; the destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources; and gross deficiencies, harmful to the physical, mental and social health of man, in the man-made environment, particularly in the living and working environment. 8/

9. The seriousness of the situation led one representative, during the Conference's debates, to state that "the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 was formulated in the shadow of nuclear war; today the Declaration on the Human Environment was being adopted in the shadow of ecological disaster". 9/

10. Dangers to the environment come from many sources and require varied responses. The Declaration states that "in the developing countries most of the environmental problems are caused by under-development. Millions continue to live far below the minimum levels required for a decent human existence, deprived of adequate food and clothing, shelter and education, health and sanitation". 10/ Economic under-development stems partly from, or is closely linked with, policies promoting apartheid; racial segregation, discrimination, colonial and other forms of oppression and foreign domination, which were condemned by the Declaration. 11/ The Conference also specifically condemned as adversely affecting the environment and well-being of the people, human settlement projects designed for colonialist and racist domination.

11. It was recognized that environmental problems in developing countries could best be remedied through accelerated development which is "essential for ensuring a favourable living and working environment for man and for creating conditions on earth that are necessary for the improvement of the quality of life". 12/

12. While stressing that people are the most precious thing in the world, as they propel all progress, including environmental progress, the Declaration stated that the natural growth of population may entail problems for the preservation of the environment, and that adequate measures should be adopted, as appropriate, to face

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6/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 1.

7/ Ibid., chap. I, principle 1.

8/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 3.

9/ Ibid., chap. X, para. 310.

10/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 4.

11/ Ibid., chap. I, principle 1.

12/ Ibid., chap. I, principle 8.

those problems. Accordingly, in those regions where the rate of population growth or excessive population concentrations are likely to have adverse effects on the human environment, and impede progress "demographic policies which are without prejudice to basic human rights and which are deemed appropriate by Governments concerned should be applied". 13/

13. Education in environmental matters for the younger generation as well as adults, together with the use of science and technology - including the free flow of up-to-date scientific information - must all be brought to bear on the effort to solve environmental problems. 14/

14. Local and national Governments will bear the greatest burden for environmental policy and action. States, the Declaration recognized, have in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies. However, they have the responsibilities to ensure that activities within their control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. 15/

15. The Declaration also recognizes that international action is needed to support the activities of developing countries in the field of environment, and because a growing class of environmental problems which affect more than one country will require extensive co-operation among nations and action by international organizations. 16/

16. It will be essential, in activities relating to the environment and its protection, to take fully into account the systems of values prevailing in each country, and the extent of the applicability of standards which are valid for the most advanced countries but which may be inappropriate and of unwarranted social cost for developing countries. 17/

B. Action Plan for the Human Environment: recommendations  
for action at the international level

17. The Action Plan for the Human Environment 18/ adopted by the Conference contains 109 recommendations dealing with five areas of environmental concern. In each area the recommendations call upon Governments and international organizations, especially the United Nations and the specialized agencies, to take action to deal with the most crucial problems involved.

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13/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 5 and principle 16..

14/ Ibid., chap. I, principles 19 and 20.

15/ Ibid., chap. I, principle 21.

16/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 7.

17/ Ibid., chap. I, principle 23.

18/ Ibid., chap. II.

18. Planning and management of human settlements for environmental quality is the object of recommendations 1-18 which deal, inter alia, with the need to approach the planning and improvement of rural and urban settlements in a way which embraces all aspects of the human environment, both natural and man-made. Thus, priority is requested for assistance to projects dealing with "the planning of human settlements, notably in housing, transportation, water, sewerage and public health, the mobilization of human and financial resources, the improvement of transitional urban settlements and the provision and maintenance of essential community services, in order to achieve as far as possible the social well-being of the receiving country as a whole". 19/

19. In addition, assistance is requested for less industrialized countries in solving the environmental problems of development projects, especially through training programmes.

20. Environmental aspects of natural resources management received attention in recommendations 19-69, which dealt with, inter alia, rural planning, pest control, fertilizers and waste products, fisheries, water resources, mining and mineral processing and energy.

21. The identification and control of pollutants of broad international significance was the subject of resolutions 70-94.

22. Educational, informational, social and cultural aspects of environmental issues were dealt with in recommendations 95-101, which recommended, inter alia, the establishment of international programmes in environmental education.

23. In the final section of the recommendations (102-109) the subject of development and environment was treated, notably the preparation of studies of environmental problems faced especially by developing countries and assistance to developing countries in promoting elementary education, with emphasis on hygiene, and in developing and applying methods for improving health, housing, sanitation and water supply, and controlling soil erosion.

24. It was also recommended that environmental considerations of an international nature related to the Action Plan should be integrated into the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade and that their implementation not reduce the normal flow of international aid to developing countries. 20/

#### C. International institutional and financial arrangements

25. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in its resolution 1 (I), 21/ expressed its conviction that, in order to be effective, international co-operation in the field of the human environment required additional financial and technical resources and new permanent institutional arrangements within the United Nations for the protection and improvement of the human environment.

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19/ Ibid., chap. II, recommendation I (a).

20/ Ibid., chap. II, recommendation 109.

21/ Ibid., chap. III.

26. The Conference thus recommended to the General Assembly the establishment of a Governing Council for Environmental Programmes composed of 54 members charged, inter alia, with promoting international co-operation in the field and with providing general policy guidance for environmental programmes within the United Nations system. The Council is also called upon to submit annual reports on environmental matters to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council, along with comments concerning questions of co-ordination and the relationship of environmental policies and programmes within the United Nations system to over-all economic and social policies and priorities. The Conference also recommended to the General Assembly the establishment of a small Environment Secretariat within the United Nations headed by an Executive Director.

27. The establishment of an Environmental Co-ordinating Board, chaired by the Executive Director under the auspices and within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, was also recommended, in the same resolution. The Board's purpose was to provide the maximum efficient co-ordination of all United Nations programmes bearing on the problems of the environment.

28. Finally, in resolution 1 (I) the Conference recommended to the General Assembly the creation of a United Nations Environment Fund on a voluntary basis for the financing of environmental programmes of general interest under the guidance of the Governing Council.

29. By resolution 2997 (XXVII) the General Assembly established the Governing Council, the Environment Secretariat, the Environment Co-ordination Board and the Environment Fund.

30. The General Assembly, by resolution 3326 (XXIX), stressed the need to continue to strengthen the Programme's activities and its co-ordinating functions and requested the Programme to conduct its activities in line with the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. It requested the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to take fully into account the permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme was also requested to bring the activities in his field of competence into line with the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a new International Economic Order. The resolution reaffirmed the importance of co-ordination and active co-operation between the United Nations Environment Programme, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other organizations of the United Nations system in their activities to ensure effective attention and action with regard to the environmental needs and problems of Member States, especially developing countries, as requested by them.

31. At sessions of the General Assembly as well as at the Conference, the view was often expressed that man possessed the skills to foresee and avert ecological misfortunes and to create a much happier and richer world where human rights could be fully realized, but that no significant advances could be made without adequate motivation. It was repeatedly emphasized that it was only through global co-operation and understanding that mankind could achieve the results that its talents could provide. 22/



II. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE  
RELATING TO THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

32. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1484 (XLVIII) of 3 April 1970, approved a recommendation of the Population Commission that a World Population Conference be convened in 1974 under the auspices of the United Nations.

33. The preparatory work included a Symposium on Population and Human Rights, organized by the United Nations in co-operation with the Government of the Netherlands and held at Amsterdam from 21 to 29 January 1974.

34. The World Population Conference was held at Bucharest (Romania) from 19 to 30 August 1974 and attended by representatives of 137 States and four liberation movements.

35. The main topics considered were: (a) recent population trends and future prospects; (b) population change and economic and social development; (c) population, resources and the environment; (d) population and the family; and (e) the World Population Plan of Action.

36. The Conference adopted 21 resolutions, four recommendations and the World Population Plan of Action, a comprehensive text which aimed to identify principles and objectives in relation to population and possible measures in that connexion. These texts are contained in the report of the Conference. 1/

A. Economic and social development, population  
policies and human rights

37. The Conference repeatedly stressed the interdependence of economic and social development, population policies and respect for human rights. The texts adopted made many references to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, in general terms, to human rights and freedoms. 2/

38. The Plan of Action declared that the aim of population policies is "to improve levels of living and the quality of life of the people". 3/ As the Conference repeatedly affirmed, the object is, in other words, to help ensure full enjoyment of the economic, social and cultural rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Conference also emphasized, however, that population policies should not in any way be regarded as capable, by themselves, of ensuring the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. They must remain "constituent elements of socio-economic development policies, never substitutes for them". 4/

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1/ Report of the United Nations World Population Conference, 1974  
(United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.XIII.3).

2/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (m) and chap. II, resolution XVI.

3/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (a).

4/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (d).

The need to integrate population policies within overall development programmes, both nationally and at the international level, and never to lose sight of the objective of securing human well-being and progress, was also noted, more particularly in Conference resolution V, entitled "For a more just world". This resolution stated, inter alia, that, as an integral part of the efforts to shape a more equitable world, the solving of problems concerning population implies the liquidation of under-development, the elimination of gaps between the industrially advanced States and those lagging behind, 5/ and the need "to expand international co-operation within the framework of a new economic order". 6/

39. The Conference also drew attention to the close relationship between activities to ensure economic and social development, including population policies, and civil and political rights and freedoms.

40. The Plan of Action emphasized the paramount importance of "respect for human life", which is "basic to all human societies", regardless of "the realization of economic and social objectives". 7/

41. The Conference took the view that, although they serve socio-economic objectives, population policies "should be consistent with internationally and nationally recognized human rights of individual freedom, justice and the survival of national, regional and minority groups". 8/ This ethical requirement is, at the same time, a prerequisite for development. The achievement of economic and social objectives "requires", in the words of the Plan of Action, "recognition of the dignity of the individual, appreciation for the human person and his self-determination, as well as the elimination of discrimination in all its forms". 9/

42. The right of all persons to equal opportunity and treatment and to protection against discriminatory measures was frequently reaffirmed by the Conference, in a number of contexts.

43. In resolution XIX, the Conference, strongly convinced that the practice of apartheid constitutes a crime against humanity and in particular a crime of genocide and that apartheid and racial discrimination in all its forms are a total negation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the objectives of the World Population Conference, and gravely concerned that the practice of the policy of apartheid in South Africa, Namibia and Southern Rhodesia leads to a serious deterioration in the quality of life and levels of living of the population, condemned the minority régimes in South Africa, Namibia and Southern Rhodesia.

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5/ Ibid., chap. II, resolution V, para. 1 (a).

6/ Ibid., chap. II, resolution V, para. 1 (e).

7/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (e).

8/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (d).

9/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (b).

44. In its Plan of Action and a number of its resolutions, the Conference recommended the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, stressed the crucial role of women in the success of population policies, and recommended the adoption of measures to ensure education for women and their full participation in the planning and implementation of those policies. 10/

45. It was recommended that high priority should be attached in population strategies to measures for prompt improvement in the living conditions of the least privileged groups of the population, particularly rural groups. 11/

46. The Conference also made appeals for consideration of the rights of minorities in population policies. 12/

47. It was stated that full participation of the people in the formulation and implementation of population policies itself constituted a human right that must be observed and an indispensable requirement for ensuring the effectiveness of those policies and respect for other human rights and freedoms in that field. 13/

B. Economic and social development, population policies  
and the right to self-determination

48. The Conference stated in its Plan of Action that "true development", together with its demographic elements, "cannot take place in the absence of national independence and liberation" and that development "requires ... self-determination". 14/ The Plan of Action condemned foreign and colonial domination, apartheid and neo-colonialism in all its forms, which still constitute the most serious obstacles to the full emancipation and progress of developing countries and of all the populations concerned.

49. Special mention was made of the economic aspect of the right to self-determination, more particularly in resolution V, which states that "the improvement of living conditions and, by and large, the solution of population problems make it imperative to respect the inalienable right of each and every country to be the master of its own national resources ... so that such resources may be utilized for the country's economic and social progress with due respect to the need to improve international economic co-operation". 15/

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10/ See in particular: ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (h) and chap. II, resolutions IV and XIII.

11/ See in particular: ibid., chap. I, paras. 14 (k) and 25 and chap. II, resolution XIII.

12/ See in particular: ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (d) and chap. II, resolution XIII, para. 2 (c).

13/ See in particular: ibid., chap. I, paras. 14 (j) and 15 (g) and chap. II, resolution XVI, para. (b).

14/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (b).

15/ Ibid., chap. II, resolution V, para. 1 (c): see also, for example, chap. II, resolution III, concerning the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States, and resolution XVII.

C. Rights relating to reproduction and to the family

50. The Conference reaffirmed the principles concerning marriage already embodied in the relevant instruments of the United Nations, which specify, inter alia, that marriage can be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses, 16/ and the law must establish a lower limit for age at marriage. 17/

51. The family was once more recognized as the basic unit of society, and the Conference stressed the need for adequate protection of the family by appropriate legislation and policy. 18/

52. The Plan of Action, recognizing the variety of national goals with regard to fertility, did not recommend any world norm for family size. 19/ Consistent with the Proclamation of the International Conference on Human Rights (Teheran, 1968) and other relevant international instruments, the Conference affirmed that "all couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so; the responsibility of couples and individuals in the exercise of this right takes into account the needs of their living and future children, and their responsibilities towards the community". 20/

53. The Conference recommended that States should respect and ensure that right "regardless of their over-all demographic goals" and, inter alia, to encourage appropriate education, to make advice available to persons seeking it and furnish the means of exercising their rights relating to reproduction; and to ensure that information about, and education in, family planning "are based on valid and proven scientific knowledge and include a full account of any risk that may be involved in the use or non-use of contraceptives". 21/ It was pointed out that "improvement of the status of women in the family and in society can contribute, where desired, to smaller family size" and that "the opportunity for women to plan births also improves their individual status". 22/

54. Family planning programmes, the Conference stressed, must be such that "they are carried out with absolute respect for the fundamental rights of the human being, that they preserve the dignity of the family, and that no coercive measures are used". 23/

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16/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 39 (d).

17/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 32 (f).

18/ Ibid., chap. I, paras. 14 (g) and 39 (a).

19/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 27.

20/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 14 (f).

21/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 29.

22/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 43.

23/ Ibid., chap. II, resolution XVI, para. (a).

55. A number of references were made to the rights of children and the young, for example, when a marriage is dissolved, 24/ equal legal and social status for children born in and out of wedlock and for adopted children, 25/ and the development of school and pre-school education. 26/ The Conference urged States to eliminate child labour and to penalize child abuse. 27/

D. Reduction of mortality and morbidity

56. The Conference recommended that efforts should be pursued, inter alia, to reduce infant mortality, to improve health and nutritional conditions, and to reduce morbidity and mortality ... differentials between "urban and rural areas, social and ethnic groups and the sexes". 28/

E. Internal migration and human rights

57. With regard to internal migration, the Conference considered that policies aimed at influencing population flows into urban areas should be co-ordinated with policies relating to the absorptive capacity of urban centres as well as policies aimed at eliminating the undesirable consequences of excessive migration. 29/ Governments were urged, in formulating and implementing such policies, to avoid measures "which infringe the right of freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State as enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments". 30/

F. International migration and human rights

58. The Conference recommended that "Governments and international organizations [should] generally facilitate voluntary international movement". 31/ It went on to say that "such movements should not be based on racial considerations which are to the detriment of indigenous populations". 32/

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24/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 39 (e).

25/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 40 (a).

26/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 32 (d).

27/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 32 (e).

28/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 24 (c).

29/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 45.

30/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 46 (a).

31/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 51.

32/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 51.

59. It was reaffirmed that problems of refugees and displaced persons arising from forced migration, including their right of return to homes and properties, should be settled in accordance with the relevant principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments. 33/

60. The countries concerned should work to prevent discrimination against migrant workers and their families, to preserve their human rights, to combat prejudice against them, to help families to be reunited and to enable them to preserve their cultural heritage. 34/ The suppression of illegal immigration should aim particularly at those who induce or facilitate that practice, and the fundamental rights of illegal immigrants should be respected.

61. Where immigration has proved to be of a long-term nature, countries are invited to explore the possibilities of extending national civil rights to immigrants. 35/

62. The Conference considered that the International Labour Organisation should promote concerted action in the field of protection of migrant workers and that "the United Nations Commission on Human Rights should help, as appropriate, to ensure that the fundamental rights of migrants are safeguarded." 36/

63. The drain of qualified personnel from developing to developed countries formed the subject of recommendations relating in particular to the formulation of national and international policies designed to obviate the adverse effects of that phenomenon on the developing countries. 37/

G. Questions concerning population age structure,  
including the rights of the aged and the young

64. Because of the increasing proportion of young people in the populations of many developing countries, the Governments of those countries were invited to accord priority to the subsistence, health, education and employment of such persons as well as their active participation in political, cultural, social and economic life. 38/

65. Other countries were urged to consider the contrary implications of the combination of their aging structure with moderate to low or very low fertility. 39/

66. All Governments were urged to carry out, as part of their development programmes, "comprehensive, humanitarian and just programmes of social security for the elderly". The need to protect the aged was also emphasized in resolution XIII. 40/

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33/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 53.

34/ Ibid., chap. I, paras. 55 and 56.

35/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 60.

36/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 62.

37/ Ibid., chap. I, paras. 57 and 58.

38/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 64.

39/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 66.

40/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 66 and chap. II, resolution XIII, para. 2 (c).

H. Implementation of the World Population Plan of Action:  
role of Governments and of international co-operation

67. While it recognized the responsibility of each Government to decide on its own population policies, the Conference emphasized that such policies should be formulated and implemented "without violating, and with due promotion of, universally accepted standards of human rights". 41/

68. International co-operation in population matters, which should play a supportive role in achieving the goals of Plan of Action, could take the form of direct technical or financial assistance over and above economic and social development aid, or other activities such as monitoring progress, research or the exchange of information. 42/ The Conference considered that international co-operation should be strengthened and international assistance in population matters considerably expanded for the purposes of proper implementation of the Plan of Action. 43/

69. The General Assembly of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Council, the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the other organizations concerned were urged to give careful consideration to the Plan of Action and to ensure an appropriate response to it. 44/

70. The Conference recommended that the appropriate bodies of the United Nations should review population trends and policies biennially, beginning in 1977, and that a comprehensive review and appraisal should be made every five years of the progress made towards achieving the goals of the Plan of Action, that review being closely co-ordinated with the review of the International Development Strategy. 45/

71. In resolution 3344 (XXIX), of 17 December 1974, the General Assembly took note with satisfaction of the report of the Conference and, in paragraph 7 of the resolution, called upon the Population Commission and the governing bodies of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and all other United Nations bodies which report to the Economic and Social Council "to determine how each can best assist in implementing the World Population Plan of Action and making adjustments which may be necessary in their work programmes and to report thereon to the Council".

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41/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 97.

42/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 100.

43/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 104.

44/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 101.

45/ Ibid., chap. I, paras. 108 and 109.

III. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE  
RELATING TO THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS

72. The World Food Conference took place in Rome from 5 to 16 November 1974 as recommended by General Assembly resolution 3180 (XXVIII). This resolution reflected the interest in the holding of such a conference expressed by the Economic and Social Council, the seventeenth session of the FAO Conference, the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation, the Fourth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries (Algiers 6-9 September 1973) and the Secretary-General of UNCTAD 1/.

73. The purpose of the World Food Conference, as laid down in resolution 3180 (XXVIII), was to develop ways and means whereby the international community as a whole could take specific action to resolve the world food problem within the broader context of development and international economic co-operation and to provide Member States with a forum in which to bring about the improvement of world food security and emergency assistance.

74. Representatives of 133 States, six liberation movements and numerous other organizations participated in the Conference 2/.

75. The Conference, after extensive debate on the character and causes of the present world food crisis and methods of responding to it, adopted a Programme of Action, consisting of the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition and 22 resolutions 3/.

A. Human rights, freedom from hunger and the world food crisis

76. In the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition the Conference solemnly reaffirmed that "every man, woman and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties" 4/.

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1/ See Report of the World Food Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.II.A.3), chap. III, paras. 1-25.

2/ Ibid., chap. IV, paras. 27-32.

3/ Ibid., chaps. I, II, V and VI.

4/ Ibid., chap. I, para. 1.



77. The Declaration stressed that "the most fundamental principles and values associated with the right to life and human dignity as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" were acutely jeopardized by the grave food crisis afflicting the peoples of the developing countries, "where most of the world's hungry and ill-nourished live and where more than two thirds of the world's population produce about one third of the world's food" 5/.

78. It was proclaimed that "the elimination of hunger and malnutrition, included as one of the objectives in the United Nations Declaration on Social Progress and Development, and the elimination of the causes that determine this situation are the common objectives of all nations" 6/.

79. Identifying the causes of the world food crisis, the Declaration recognized that the situation of the peoples afflicted by hunger and malnutrition arose from historical circumstances: "social inequalities, including in many cases alien and colonial domination, foreign occupation, racial discrimination, apartheid and neo-colonialism in all its forms, which continue to be among the greatest obstacles to the full emancipation and progress of the developing countries and all the peoples involved" 7/. The negative effects of colonialism on the food situation of its victims and the need for special assistance were emphasized in resolution XV, entitled "Food aid to victims of colonial wars in Africa".

80. A significant contribution to the solution of the world food problem will be made by the establishment of a just and peaceful world order since, in the Declaration's words, "Peace and justice encompass an economic dimension helping the solution of the world economic problems, the liquidation of under-development, offering a lasting and definitive solution of the food problem for all peoples and guaranteeing to all countries the right to implement freely and effectively their development programmes. To this effect, it is necessary to eliminate threats and resort to force and to promote peaceful co-operation between States to the fullest extent possible, to apply the principles of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, full equality of rights and respect of national independence and sovereignty, as well as to encourage the peaceful co-operation between all States, irrespective of their political, social and economic systems. The further improvement of international relations will create better conditions for international co-operation in all fields which should make possible large financial and material resources to be used, inter alia, for developing agricultural production and substantially improving world food security" 8/. In that connexion, references were made in the Declaration to the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

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5/ Ibid., chap. I, preamble, para. (a)

6/ Ibid., chap. I, preamble, para. (b)

7/ Ibid., chap. I, preamble, para. (c).

8/ Ibid., chap. I, para. (h).

81. The Declaration stressed, inter alia, the duty of each Government to take steps to solve food problems during the preparation and implementation of national programmes for economic and social development, "with emphasis on their humanitarian aspects" 9/, as well as the need for international assistance and the responsibility of the entire international community to ensure, at all times, the availability of adequate world supplies of basic food-stuffs 10/.

82. The resolutions of the Conference attempted to define more specifically ways and means of implementing the right to freedom from hunger and malnutrition. In resolution I, on "Objectives and strategies of food production", Governments of the developing countries were called upon to formulate, with the full participation of the producers and organizations concerned, adequate food production policies, and to take measures for agrarian reform and a progressive change in the socio-economic structures and relationships in rural areas. The Conference requested the Governments of developed countries to substantially increase their development aid to agriculture in developing countries, and to contribute to international emergency assistance schemes, and requested all countries to reduce to a minimum the waste of food and agricultural resources. Recommendations were made to FAO and other international agencies to strengthen their research and assistance programmes.

83. Following upon debates in which it was stressed that at least 460 million people were suffering from severe protein malnutrition and that almost half of these were young children 11/, the Conference adopted resolution V, on "Policies and programmes to improve nutrition", in which it called on Governments to adopt concerted food and nutrition policies, particularly for vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, infants and pre-school children. In this and resolution VIII, the key role of women in the procurement and preparation of food was stressed and it was recommended that steps be taken to improve their nutrition, their educational levels and their working conditions, and to encourage them and enable them to breast-feed their children. The Conference recommended, inter alia, that Governments should disseminate nutrition education, strengthen basic health services, and improve environmental conditions. With the aid of the World Health Organization and other organizations concerned, Governments should establish a world-wide control programme to reduce substantially deficiencies of vitamin, iodine and iron/folate as quickly as possible.

84. Resolution IX called on all Governments and on people everywhere not only to make every possible effort to grow and equitably distribute sufficient food and income so that all human beings might have an adequate diet, but also to support, for a longer term solution, rational population policies ensuring to couples "the right to determine the number and spacing of births, freely and responsibly, in accordance with national needs within the context of an over-all development strategy".

85. The urgent need for ensuring the availability at all times of adequate world supplies of basic food-stuffs particularly so as to avoid acute food shortages, to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption in countries with low levels of per capita intake and to effect fluctuations in production and prices, was stressed by the Conference in resolution XVII. This resolution also

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9/ Ibid, para. 3. See also para. 2 and paras. 4-6

10/ Ibid., in particular paras. 7, 8 and 12.

11/ Ibid., chap. V, para. 86

recognized, the common responsibility of the entire international community in evolving policies and arrangements designed to ensure world food security and the "difficulties currently faced especially by the developing countries in building up stocks ... which require an immediate increase in the food production of the developed countries while the developing countries are simultaneously assisted to increase their food production and build up their own stocks". The Conference in this same resolution endorsed the objectives, policies and guidelines of the International Undertaking on World Food Security proposed by the FAO (E/CONF.65/4, chap. 14, annex A), invited all Governments to express their readiness to adopt them and urged them to co-operate in bringing into operation the proposed International Undertaking as soon as possible.

B. International action to implement the recommendations  
of the Conference

86. The Conference concluded that the solution of the world food problem required co-ordinated action: (a) to increase food production; (b) to improve consumption and distribution of food; and (c) to build a system of food security 12/.

87. It was recognized that the primary responsibility for the implementation of many of the resolutions and decisions adopted at the Conference lay, of course, with the Governments concerned. At the same time, arrangements for follow-up action at the international level, including appropriate operational machinery were recognized as necessary.

1. World Food Council

88. The Conference called upon the General Assembly to establish a World Food Council, at the ministerial or plenipotentiary level, to function as an organ of the United Nations reporting to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council, and to serve as a co-ordinating mechanism to provide over-all, integrated and continuing attention for the successful co-ordination and follow-up of policies concerning food production, nutrition, food security, food trade and food aid, as well as other related matters, by all the agencies of the United Nations system. The Council would review periodically major problems and policy issues affecting the world food situation, and the steps being proposed or taken to resolve them by Governments, by the United Nations system and its regional organizations, and recommend remedial action as appropriate. 13/

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12/ Ibid., chap. VIII, para. 384.

13/ Ibid., chap. II, resolution XXII, paras. 1-4. (The World Food Council was established by General Assembly resolution 3348 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974).

2. Committee on World Food Security

89. The Conference recommended that the FAO establish a Committee on World Food Security as a standing committee of the FAO Council. The Committee would, inter alia, review the steps taken by Governments to implement the proposed International Undertaking on World Food Security and recommend such short-term and long-term policy action as might be considered necessary to remedy any difficulty foreseen in assuring adequate cereal supplies for minimum world food security. The Committee would also submit periodic and special reports to the World Food Council 14/.

3. Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes

90. The functions of this Committee, in addition to submitting periodic and special reports to the World Food Council, would include reviewing periodically general trends in food aid requirements and food aid availabilities and recommending to Governments improvements in food aid policies and programmes 15/.

4. International Fund for Agricultural Development

91. In resolution XIII the Conference recommended that an International Fund for Agricultural Development be established to finance agricultural development projects primarily for food production in the developing countries. Contributions to the fund would be on a voluntary basis and disbursements would be made through existing international and/or regional institutions.

5. Action by the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies

92. The Conference called on the Economic and Social Council and the special agencies for assistance in implementing the programme through various measures. In particular, the Conference in resolution XXII requested the Economic and Social Council to consider on an urgent basis, and make recommendations on, whether or not rearrangements in the United Nations system or new institutional bodies might be justified in order to ensure effective follow-up on Conference resolution V on nutrition.

93. In resolution XXII, the Conference also requested IBRD, FAO and UNDP to organize a Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment in Developing Countries, to be composed of bilateral and multilateral donors and representatives of developing countries, which would keep the World Food Council informed of activities to increase, co-ordinate, and improve the efficiency of financial and technical assistance to agricultural production in developing countries.

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14/ Ibid., resolution XXII, para. 5.

15/ Ibid., para. 6.