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OBSERVANCE OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Aykut BERK (Turkey)

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1 - 4	2
II. PROCEEDINGS IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE . . . . .	5 - 16	2
III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE . . . . .	17	7

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, at its 2123rd plenary meeting on 21 September 1973, allocated to the Third Committee agenda item 56, entitled "Observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".
2. The Third Committee considered this item at its 1996th meeting, on 12 October, and at its 1998th to 2002nd meetings, from 15 to 19 October 1973. The summary records of these meetings (A/C.3/SR.1996-2002) contain the views expressed by representatives of Member States on the item.
3. The Committee had before it a progress report of the Secretary-General (A/9133 and Add.1-3) containing information on measures and activities undertaken or contemplated in connexion with the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by Governments, the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the regional intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned.
4. The item was introduced by the Director of the Division of Human Rights at the 1996th meeting. The Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs addressed the Committee on the item at the 1998th meeting.

## II. PROCEEDINGS IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE

5. The Committee held a general debate on the item at its 1998th to 2001st meetings, from 16 to 18 October 1973. The summary records of these meetings (A/C.3/SR.1998-2001) contain the views of the representatives of Member States.

### Draft resolution A/C.3/L.2010

6. At the 1998th meeting, the representative of Sweden introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2010) sponsored by Austria, Costa Rica, the Netherlands, Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago, and subsequently also by Ireland. The text of the draft resolution read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Mindful of article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

"Gravely concerned about the fact that torture is still practised in various parts of the world,

"1. Decides to examine the question of torture as a separate item at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the question to be presented at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly."

/...

7. At the 1999th meeting, the representative of Sweden, on behalf of the sponsors, introduced a revised text (A/C.3/L.2010/Rev.1), sponsored also by Lesotho and Nepal. The revised draft resolution read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Mindful of article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

"Gravely concerned that torture is still practised in various parts of the world,

"1. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare an introductory note on the question, taking into account the consideration which may be given to this question in the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council, to be presented at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly;

"2. Decides to examine the question of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as a separate item at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly."

8. The following amendments to the revised draft resolution were submitted:

(a) To the preamble:

An amendment by Egypt (A/C.3/L.2015, No. 1) to add, after the second preambular paragraph, the following paragraphs:

"Bearing in mind that this subject has been brought before various organs dealing with the field of human rights, through various reports relating to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

"Bearing in mind also that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities has asked the Commission on Human Rights to authorize it to include on its agenda for the next session an item on the human rights of persons subjected to any form of detention and imprisonment,"

(b) To the operative paragraphs:

(i) An amendment by Denmark (A/C.3/L.2013) to insert the following two operative paragraphs before operative paragraph 1, and to renumber the subsequent paragraphs accordingly:

"1. Rejects any form of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

/...

"2. Urges all Governments to become parties to existing international instruments which contain provisions relating to prohibition of torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;"

- (ii) An amendment by Egypt (A/C.3/L.2015, No. 2) to delete the two operative paragraphs and replace them by the following:

"Requests the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, of the consideration which may have been given to this question by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities or by the Commission on Human Rights."

9. At the 2002nd meeting, the sponsors of the draft resolution agreed to revise further their text to incorporate the amendments submitted by Denmark. At the same meeting, the representative of Iraq suggested that the amendments submitted by Egypt, with some drafting changes, be incorporated into the draft resolution. The sponsors accepted that suggestion and the text was accordingly revised.

10. The Committee then adopted the draft resolution, as revised, unanimously (see paragraph 17 below, draft resolution A).

Draft resolution A/C.3/L.2011

11. At the 2000th meeting, the representative of Mauritania introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2011) sponsored by Afghanistan, Algeria, Cyprus, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Tunisia, Zaire and Zambia, which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling that in its resolution 2860 (XXVI) it expressed its conviction of the historic significance and enduring value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations and its desire to mark, in 1973, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration in a manner which would fit the occasion and serve the cause of human rights,

"Also recalling that in its resolution 2906 (XXVII) it reaffirmed its adherence to the principles, values and ideals contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved a programme of suitable activities which could be undertaken to observe the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration,

"Noting with satisfaction resolution 2919 (XXVII) of 15 November 1972 in which it decided to launch the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in inauguration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and at the same time regretting the fact that there are still many objectives of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which have been inadequately attained,

/...

"Having examined the progress report submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 2906 (XXVII) (A/9133 and Add.1-2),

"Noting with satisfaction the measures and activities undertaken or contemplated in connexion with the programme for the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

"1. Invites Governments, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to give consideration as appropriate to further measures which may fit the occasion and serve the cause of human rights and to rededicate themselves to the fullest implementation of the Declaration;

"2. Expresses the hope that the observance by the world community of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will contribute in a significant manner to the realization of the principles, values and ideals contained in the Universal Declaration for the benefit of all mankind."

12. At the 2001st meeting, the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic submitted an amendment (A/C.3/L.2012) to include, after operative paragraph 1, a second operative paragraph as follows:

"2. Invites States which have not yet done so to ratify conventions concluded in the field of human rights, in particular the following:

"(a) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

"(b) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

"(c) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights."

13. At the same meeting, the representative of Trinidad and Tobago introduced the following amendments (A/C.3/L.2014) to the draft resolution:

(a) Delete the last part of the third preambular paragraph, beginning with the words "and at the same time" to the end of the paragraph;

(b) Insert the following paragraph as the fourth preambular paragraph:

"Regretting the fact that there are still many objectives of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which have not yet been implemented and urging renewed commitment towards achieving this end."

(c) In operative paragraph 1, delete the word "Invites" and replace by "Urges".

(d) Replace the last part of operative paragraph 1, beginning with the words "to give consideration as appropriate," by the following: "to rededicate themselves

/...

during and after the observance of the anniversary celebrations to adopting further measures designed to serve the cause of human rights and the implementation of the Declaration;".

14. The sponsors of the draft resolution accepted the amendment submitted by the Byelorussian SSR and a revised text (A/C.3/L.2011/Rev.1) was issued, sponsored by the Congo, India, Madagascar, Mali, Peru, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yugoslavia, and subsequently by the Federal Republic of Germany, the Philippines, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The revised text read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling that in its resolution 2860 (XXVI) it expressed its conviction of the historic significance and enduring value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations and its desire to mark, in 1973, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration in a manner which would fit the occasion and serve the cause of human rights,

"Also recalling that in its resolution 2906 (XXVII) it reaffirmed its adherence to the principles, values and ideals contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved a programme of suitable activities which could be undertaken to observe the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration,

"Recalling resolution 2919 (XXVII) of 15 November 1972 in which it decided to launch the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in inauguration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and at the same time regretting the fact that there are still many objectives of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which have been inadequately attained,

"Having examined the progress report submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 2906 (XXVII) (A/9133 and Add.1-3),

"Noting with satisfaction the measures and activities undertaken or contemplated in connexion with the programme for the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

"1. Invites Governments, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to give consideration as appropriate to further measures which may fit the occasion and serve the cause of human rights and to rededicate themselves to the fullest implementation of the Declaration;

"2. Invites States which have not yet done so to ratify conventions concluded in the field of human rights, in particular the following:

"(a) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

/...

"(b) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

"(c) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

"3. Urges the world community to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary in such a way as to contribute in a significant manner to the realization of the principles, values and ideals contained in the Universal Declaration for the benefit of all mankind."

15. At the 2002nd meeting, the sponsors of the revised draft resolution agreed to incorporate in their text the amendments submitted by Trinidad and Tobago, as orally revised following a suggestion made by the representative of Morocco.

16. The Committee then adopted the draft resolution, as revised, unanimously (see paragraph 17 below, draft resolution B).

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

17. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

#### Observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

##### A

#### The General Assembly,

Mindful of article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

Gravely concerned that torture is still practised in various parts of the world,

Bearing in mind that this subject has been brought before various organs dealing with human rights, through various reports relating to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Bearing in mind also that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities has asked the Commission on Human Rights to authorize it to include in its agenda for the next session an item on the human rights of persons subjected to any form of detention and imprisonment,

1. Rejects any form of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

2. Urges all Governments to become parties to existing international instruments which contain provisions relating to the prohibition of torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly, under the item "Report of the Economic and Social Council", of the consideration which may have been given to this question by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities or by the Commission on Human Rights and other bodies concerned;

4. Decides to examine the question of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in relation to detention and imprisonment as an item at a future session of the General Assembly.

B

The General Assembly,

Recalling that in its resolution 2860 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971 it expressed its conviction of the historic significance and enduring value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations and its desire to mark, in 1973, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration in a manner which would fit the occasion and serve the cause of human rights,

Also recalling that in its resolution 2906 (XXVII) of 19 October 1972 it reaffirmed its adherence to the principles, values and ideals contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved a programme of suitable activities which could be undertaken in observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration,

Recalling resolution 2919 (XXVII) of 15 November 1972 in which it decided to launch the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and to inaugurate the activities thereof on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Regretting that there are still many objectives of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which have not yet been implemented and urging renewed commitment by all peoples and nations towards achieving this end,

Having examined the progress report submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 2906 (XXVII), 1/

Noting with satisfaction the measures and activities undertaken or contemplated in connexion with the programme for the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

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1/ A/9133 and Add.1-3.



1. Urges Governments, the specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, to rededicate themselves during and after the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to adopting further measures designed to serve the cause of human rights and the implementation of the Declaration;

2. Invites States which have not yet done so to ratify the conventions concluded in the field of human rights, in particular the following:

(a) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; 2/

(b) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; 3/

(c) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; 3/

3. Urges the world community to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in such a way as to contribute in a significant manner to the realization of the principles, values and ideals contained in the Declaration for the benefit of all mankind.

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2/ General Assembly resolution 2106 A (XX).

3/ General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI).