



Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1980/6/Add.9
20 February 1980

ORIGINAL: ARABIC/ENGLISH

First regular session of 1980
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC,
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Reports submitted in accordance with Council resolution
1988 (LX) by States Parties to the Covenant concerning
rights covered by articles 10 to 12

Addendum

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

[21 December 1979]

A. Measures taken for the protection of the family, mothers
and children in implementation of article 10, and
measures for care and supervision carried out by the
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour in this area

1. Care for children

(a) With regard to family care for orphans and deprived children, the popular charitable associations give them full care and provide food, clothing, education and social care, under the supervision and with the material assistance of the Ministry;

(b) The Ministry provides care for foundlings in special institutions;

(c) The Ministry provides care and rehabilitation for juvenile delinquents in its special institutions;

(d) The Ministry provides systematic education and care for the physically handicapped, the deaf, the dumb, the blind and the mentally retarded in special institutes.

2. Family care

The charitable associations provide assistance in cash and in kind for needy families, and the Ministry gives large families a badge which ensures them certain facilities with regard to exemption from certain school and other taxes and transportation fares.

B. Measures taken to guarantee the right to an adequate standard of living, in accordance with article 11, and progress made in the implementation of those measures by the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade

1. Measures taken to improve and disseminate knowledge relating to methods of food preservation

(a) The establishment of a public company for grain silos and feed and fodder stations, to supervise a cohesive plan covering three basic matters, namely:

- (i) Grain silos in production, consumption and exportation areas, provided with the most modern equipment for grain preservation, with a capacity of approximately 700,000 tons, in addition to the existing storage facilities of the Public Grain Institution, which have a capacity of 422,000 tons;
- (ii) Seed stations, to meet the country's needs for good, clean, improved, processed seeds;
- (iii) Fodder plants to provide manufactured concentrated fodder by the most modern means, so as to help the development of animal resources;

(b) The establishment of a public company for storage and refrigeration to administer and operate storage and refrigeration units in all parts of the country, take care of the reserve of the public and private sectors and operate refrigerated transport units;

(c) The Ministry has drawn up specifications for the storage of major basic commodities, such as sugar, rice and flour;

(d) Expansion of the network of conserving companies throughout the country in order to meet needs for preserved goods.

2. Measures taken for the improvement and distribution of food-stuffs

(a) The establishment of a public company for vegetables and fruit to deal with wholesale and retail trade in vegetables and fruit, deal with marketing from areas of production or importation and see to the packing of vegetables and fruit in special containers that accord with health specifications;

(b) The establishment of a public company for retail trade, to supervise and administer centres for sales to consumers in the various parts of each city, town and village in the country with regard to both unrationed and rationed consumer goods. This is in addition to the consumer co-operatives which are spread throughout all parts of the country and provide goods to consumers without using a large number of intermediaries.

3. Measures taken to improve levels of food consumption and nutrition

The Government has established a system of rationing for the distribution of sugar, rice and oil in order to ensure a nutritionally necessary amount at low prices for all members of the population. In addition, bread is sold at less than one third of the cost to all citizens in as large amounts as are desired.

4. Measures taken to reduce food adulteration and falsification, improve the quality and wholesomeness of food-stuffs on the market and in storage and preserve the wholesomeness of food-stuffs at all levels

The Ministry, in co-operation with the Specifications and Standards Board of the Syrian Arab Republic, has set minimum quality specifications for the various food-stuffs and certain other products, which must be observed, on pain of punishment under the provisions of the Act on the Suppression of Adulteration and Falsification. Inspectors take periodic samples of all products for analysis to see how far they conform with the specifications set.

5. Measures taken to disseminate information on principles of nutrition

(a) Instruction in nutrition in the food industries departments at the colleges of agriculture at Damascus, Aleppo and Tishrin.

(b) The establishment of a food sciences association composed of experts in this field to disseminate information on nutrition;

(c) The convening of conferences on nutrition, such as the First National Conference on Food and Nutrition, which was held at Damascus in 1972 under the auspices of the Ministries of Planning and Supply. Also the designation of weeks for the inculcation of nutritional awareness in schools by the Ministry of Education, such as the weeks organized in 1972 and 1977 to make school teachers and pupils more aware in this field;

(d) The carrying out of field surveys on food in various parts of the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular by the Ministries of Health and Education, in order to determine levels of food consumption and pin-point food shortages, and the publication of the resulting data so that the necessary measures can be taken.

6. Participation in international co-operation in order to attain freedom from hunger by a just distribution of world food supplies

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic co-operates with the World Food Programme to ensure the provision of the quantities required to meet the needs of the poor countries, within its capacities in this area. Supplies of food-stuffs are also provided by the Programme to assist development and social projects in the Syrian Arab Republic, in implementation of agreements signed between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Programme. Under this project, the public authorities concerned see to the distribution of the food-stuffs to workers in accordance with a quota system in order to ensure equity of distribution among all users of these food-stuffs under the supervision of the authorities. These matters are regulated by quotas assigned to the workers; the food-stuffs are distributed in accordance with these quotas, and the necessary registers of these distributions are kept.

7. Statistics on the attainment of the right to adequate food

The Ministry has prepared food budgets starting from 1966 and going up to 1978, with a view to discovering the true food situation in the country, so that the necessary precautions may be taken to raise the standard of nutrition.

C. Measures taken to ensure respect for the rights laid down in article 12 relating to enjoyment of physical and mental health

1. Article 1 of Ordinance No. 111 of 1 September 1966 concerning the personnel of the Ministry of Health lays down some of the tasks which the Ministry of Health is to carry out in order to ensure rights relating to the right to enjoyment of physical and mental health. They include the following:

(a) Development of health services, the provision of health services, the expansion of their scope and the raising of public health standards to meet the country's needs and capacities and to keep pace with social and economic development in the country;

(b) Protecting citizens from epidemic and endemic infectious diseases and combating and eradicating such diseases;

(c) The planned provision of health services and making them available to all citizens;

(d) Care for the health of pregnant women, infants, children and students, health supervision over workers, prisoners, nurseries, convalescent homes, homes for the aged and centres for the observation of juvenile delinquents and the establishments of model institutions for maternal and child care;

(e) Health contributions to institutions for the vocational rehabilitation of the handicapped and the sick where their health so require;

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(f) A study of the nutrition situation in the country from the health point of view and efforts to raise the nutritional level of the entire population;

(g) The departments in the Ministry of Health carry out these tasks and other tasks laid down in the Act. We enclose herewith a copy of Ordinance No. 111 and we also enclose a copy of the report of the Head of the Department of Maternal and Child Welfare on everything relating to respect for the rights laid down in article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

2. Through its hospitals and health centres, the Ministry of Health ensures treatment for mental and psychological illness free of charge for all citizens and gives them medicaments free of charge when they are cured of their illnesses.

3. Act No. 1 of 6 February 1979, a copy of which is enclosed herewith, was promulgated to establish the General Department of Health Security, which aims at providing health insurance for all citizens of the country.
