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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ITEM IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA
OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

NEED TO IMPART TO THE TEACHING STAFF OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS
A KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Note verbale dated 5 July 1968 from the Permanent Mission of Italy
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to propose, pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that the following item be placed on the agenda of the twenty-third session of the General Assembly:

"Need to impart to the teaching staff of primary and secondary schools a knowledge of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, with particular reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

In compliance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure, an explanatory memorandum and draft resolution are attached.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. The experience of over twenty years has demonstrated how inadequate is the world's knowledge of the recent phenomenon of the international organization - the most important embodiment of which is considered to be the United Nations and its specialized agencies - or, worse still, how poorly understood its essence, its principles and its active existence are.
2. This lack of knowledge and understanding, as United Nations circles well know, inevitably has an unfavourable effect on the political, economic and social life of nations, and on relations among the peoples of different countries.
3. Experience has also shown how resistant the older generations are to changes in ideas and customs, and to the elimination of false, deeply entrenched prejudices.
4. It is accordingly to the young generations that one must chiefly look in order to overcome the inertia of psychological forces which are, at times, formidable.
5. In speaking of the young, we mean in this instance the truly young, those who attend primary school and then continue their studies at secondary schools. It is precisely at this stage of education, coinciding as it does with the beginning of one's career - with that time of life when the mind, as yet fresh, is more easily moulded - that such training, reflecting the new ideas and realities, must be unremittingly pursued.
6. The young people entering the universities today are already precociously mature men and women. Hence, apart from the fact that only a minority of young people have access to university studies, it would be too late to begin their training at that stage. Although they can indeed apprehend the concept, they could only with difficulty understand its innovatory spirit and assimilate the principle of it to the extent of applying it spontaneously in their daily public and private lives.
7. It is here that the problem arises. Who can acquaint young people with the phenomenon of the international organization, that living reality which permeates national and international life today, often without that fact being perceived by individuals? Who can inculcate in young people the principles of agreement, tolerance and understanding among nations with a view to achieving that minimum of general well-being, moral and material, which is the essential prerequisite for world

peace and security? Who can teach them in such a way that their minds assimilate those "human rights" which have been proclaimed and endorsed by the United Nations as the very basis of all human society?

8. Who, then, is to do this if their teachers themselves know little or nothing of what it is all about?

9. This is a vicious circle which must be broken at all costs.

10. The young people themselves are eager to know; they want to be in a position to judge and act in full knowledge of the facts. They are dissatisfied with the society into which they were born and in which they are growing up. Their dissatisfaction and impatience are exploding throughout the world as never before. They are rallying in revolt under different flags, but there are few among them rallying under the banner of these innovatory principles. They are not even familiar with this banner, or else they know it only superficially and remain sceptical.

11. It would indeed be worth while, we believe, to offer them from childhood, from their first youth onwards, the means of knowing that banner, of understanding its true value and countless opportunities, of endeavouring to bend their wills in its service.

12. There are only two ways of doing this, one complementary to the other, which the General Assembly could commend to the attention of Member States:

(a) To establish as a compulsory subject in all university faculties and any other institutions intended for the training of teaching personnel for primary and secondary schools the study of the international organization, with reference primarily to the United Nations and its specialized agencies and to the principles proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(b) To introduce into the curricula of primary and secondary schools progressive instruction in the subject in question, inviting teachers to seize every opportunity provided by the teaching of certain subjects (such as history and geography, for example) to draw the attention of their pupils to the profound transformation which the international community is undergoing today as a result of the development of the international organization and the principles upon which it is founded.

13. Furthermore, since the question of instruction about the United Nations and the specialized agencies has frequently been discussed and has been the subject of

resolutions of the United Nations, the specialized agencies (particularly UNESCO) and other international organizations, it is desirable that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to prepare a summary of the resolutions on this subject adopted by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and IAEA, and of the opinions, objections and suggestions of States expressed in the discussions relating to it.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Need to impart to the teaching staff of primary and secondary schools a knowledge of the United Nations and its related agencies, with particular reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 137 (II) of 17 November 1947 and 1511 (XV) of 12 December 1960 concerning the teaching of the purposes and principles, the structure and activities of the United Nations and its related agencies in the schools of Member States,

Considering that such teaching is not yet sufficiently widespread throughout the world, especially in primary and secondary schools, in which it is sometimes non-existent,

Conscious of the need for a great intensification of efforts if the training of the young generations is to reflect the principles proclaimed by the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Convinced that such training must, in order to achieve the desired results, begin at the first stage of education, which coincides with that phase of life when the mind, still fresh, is more easily moulded,

Conscious of the fact that young people will never receive a training which meets the requirements of a world in which interdependence is increasing ever more rapidly if their educators are themselves uninstructed in the subject of international organization,

Convinced that this is a vicious circle which must ultimately be broken,

1. Urges the Governments of the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies and of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the competent authorities of the component States of federal States and the authorities responsible for private universities to take the necessary measures to introduce, in all university faculties and any other institutions intended for the training of teaching staff for primary and secondary schools, the study, on a compulsory basis for teaching purposes, of the phenomenon of the international organization, with particular reference to the United Nations and its related agencies and to the principles proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

2. Urges the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies and of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the competent authorities of the component States of federal States, to introduce into the curricula of their primary and secondary schools progressive instruction in the subject in question, inviting teachers to seize every opportunity provided by the teaching of certain subjects (such as history and geography, for example) to draw the attention of their pupils to the profound transformation which the international community is today undergoing as a result of the development of the international organization and the principles upon which it is founded;

3. Requests the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to continue and encourage the study of appropriate ways and means of promoting the achievement of the aims envisaged in operative paragraphs 1 and 2;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare: (a) a list of resolutions dealing with the subject of this resolution which have been adopted by the United Nations and its related agencies; (b) a summary of the opinions, objections and suggestions expressed in the discussions on this subject; (c) a list of reports, studies, etc., concerning this subject.
