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STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND
 CULTURAL RIGHTS, THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND
 POLITICAL RIGHTS AND THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE INTERNATIONAL
 COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Report of the Third Committee

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 1939th meeting, on 25 September 1971, the General Assembly allocated to the Third Committee agenda item 63 entitled "Status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights". The item had been placed on the agenda of the twenty-sixth session in pursuance of a decision taken by the General Assembly at its 1930th plenary meeting, on 15 December 1970, during the twenty-fifth session. The Third Committee considered this item at its 1884th and 1885th meetings, on 26 November 1971.

2. The Committee had before it a report of the Secretary-General which contained information on signature and ratification of, and accession to, the two covenants and the Optional Protocol,^{1/} as well as the text of a resolution concerning trade union rights and their relations to civil liberties, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its fifty-fourth session in June 1970.

II. DEBATE

3. There was general agreement during the consideration of this item on the importance, for the attainment of United Nations objectives in the field of human rights, of bringing the International Covenants on Human Rights into effect at an early date. A number of representatives also expressed the hope that the Optional Protocol could also be brought into effect. Several representatives pointed with regret to the considerable length of time which had elapsed since the adoption of these instruments in 1966. The opinion was expressed in particular that it would be desirable to obtain wider legal adherence to the Covenants so that they could be brought into force by the twenty-fifth anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1973.

^{1/} After the issuance of the Secretary-General's report, Madagascar deposited on 22 September 1971 an instrument of ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. At present, 12 States have ratified or acceded to the international covenants and five States have ratified the Optional Protocol.

4. The views expressed by representatives are contained in the summary records of the 1884th and 1885th meetings of the Committee.

III. DRAFT RESOLUTION AND AMENDMENTS

5. At the 1885th meeting, on 26 November 1971, a draft resolution was introduced by Cyprus on behalf of Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia (A/C.3/L.1894). At the same meeting, Costa Rica, the Netherlands, Sweden and Uruguay submitted amendments (A/C.3/L.1898) which would add the words "and the Optional Protocol" to the second preambular paragraph and to the operative part of the draft resolution where references were made to the international covenants on human rights.

IV. VOTING

6. At the 1885th meeting, the Committee voted on the four-Power amendments (A/C.3/L.1898) as follows:

(a) The first amendment, which would insert the words "and the Optional Protocol" after the words "International Covenants on Human Rights" in the second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, was adopted by 21 votes to none, with 67 abstentions. At the request of the representative of the Netherlands, the vote was taken by roll call. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Lesotho, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Barbados, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Chile, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Khmer Republic, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

(b) The second amendment, which would add the words "and the Optional Protocol" at the end of each of the operative paragraphs, was adopted by 22 votes to none, with 67 abstentions. At the request of the representative of the Netherlands, the vote was taken by roll call. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Lesotho, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Barbados, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Chile, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Khmer Republic, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

7. Draft resolution A/C.3/L.1894 as a whole, as amended, was adopted unanimously.

V. RECOMMENDATION OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

8. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The General Assembly,

Having noted the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,^{2/}

Firmly believing that the entry into force of the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Optional Protocol will greatly enhance the ability of the United Nations to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, and will contribute to the attainment of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations,

Desirous of making all possible efforts that may be appropriate to assist in hastening the process of ratification and, if possible, bringing into force those instruments by the twenty-fifth anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1973,

1. Recommends that Member States should give special attention to possibilities of accelerating as far as possible the internal procedures that would lead to the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol;

2. Requests the Secretary-General, on the basis of communications from Governments, to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session and at such other times as he may consider appropriate on the progress of the ratification of the Covenants and the Optional Protocol.
