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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 18 (b)

EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Argentina, Australia*, Austria, Belgium*, Botswana, Brazil*,
Bulgaria*, Canada, Cape Verde, Dominican Republic*, El Salvador,
France, Germany, Greece*, Honduras*, Hungary*, Ireland, Italy,
Japan, Lithuania*, Madagascar, Malta*, New Zealand*, Norway,
Philippines, Portugal*, Romania, Senegal, South Africa, Spain*,
Ukraine*, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
Uruguay, Venezuela: draft resolution

1999/... Regional arrangements for the promotion
and protection of human rights

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 (A/CONF.157/23), which reiterated, inter alia, the need to consider the possibility of establishing regional and subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights where they do not already exist,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 32/127 of 16 December 1977 and all subsequent resolutions of the Assembly concerning regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, most recently resolution 53/148 of 9 December 1998,

* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Recalling also Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/34 of 11 April 1997,

Reaffirming that regional arrangements play a fundamental role in promoting and protecting human rights and should reinforce universal human rights standards, as contained in international human rights instruments, and their protection,

Recalling that the World Conference recommended that more resources should be made available for the strengthening or the establishment of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights under the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Supporting the efforts made by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and regional intergovernmental organizations in order to promote and protect human rights at the regional level, and the conclusion of regional arrangements in the field of human rights,

Noting the expansion of the technical cooperation programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, extended upon the request of the concerned Member States, and the crucial importance of sharing information and experiences and developing and strengthening national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Considering that the cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the field of human rights continues to be both substantive and mutually supportive and possibilities exist for increased cooperation,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1999/93);

2. Welcomes the continuing cooperation and assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the further strengthening of the existing regional arrangements and regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular through technical cooperation which is aimed at national capacity-building, public information and education, with a view to exchanging information and experience in the field of human rights;

3. Also welcomes, in that respect, the close cooperation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the organization of regional and subregional training courses and workshops in the

field of human rights, high-level government expert meetings and regional conferences of national human rights institutions, aimed at creating greater understanding of the promotion and protection of human rights issues in the regions, improving procedures and examining the various systems for the promotion and protection of universally accepted human rights standards and at identifying obstacles to ratification of the principal international human rights and strategies to overcome them;

4. Stresses the importance of the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights and renews its appeal to all Governments to consider making use of the possibilities offered by the United Nations, under this programme, of organizing workshops or training courses at the national level for government personnel and relevant professional groups on the application of international human rights standards and the experience of relevant international bodies, and notes with satisfaction, in that respect, the establishment of technical cooperation projects with Governments of all regions;

5. Welcomes the growing exchanges between the United Nations and the bodies created by the United Nations in accordance with the treaties dealing with human rights, on the one hand, and regional intergovernmental organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, on the other hand;

6. Reiterates the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights that human rights officers be assigned if and when necessary to regional offices of the United Nations for the purpose of disseminating information and offering training and other technical assistance in the field of human rights upon the request of the concerned Member States, and in this regard calls upon the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to also disseminate information regarding regional arrangements which exist in different parts of the world;

7. Welcomes in this regard the appointment by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of a regional programme adviser, based in Pretoria, within the framework of its programme of technical cooperation, who is facilitating the promotion and protection of human rights,

democracy and the rule of law through projects and activities and by providing on-site support and advice, upon request, to Governments and the Southern African Development Community;

8. Takes note with appreciation of the decision made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to make available, at the request of Member States, the services of a regional human rights adviser as a regional project officer in connection with the implementation of technical cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region, in accordance with the framework of cooperation established at the sixth Workshop on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region, held in Tehran from 28 February to 2 March 1998;

9. Requests the Secretary-General, as foreseen in programme 19, Human rights, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, to continue to strengthen exchanges between the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations dealing with human rights and to make available adequate resources from within the regular budget of technical cooperation to these activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote regional arrangements;

10. Welcomes the adoption by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity of the Protocol to the Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the establishment of an African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as the assistance provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the elaboration of this Protocol;

11. Invites States in areas where regional arrangements in the field of human rights do not yet exist to consider concluding agreements with a view to the establishment within their respective regions of suitable regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights;

12. Requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to pay special attention to the most appropriate ways of assisting, at their request, countries of the different regions under the programme of technical cooperation and to make, where necessary, relevant recommendations;

13. Invites the Secretary-General, in the report he will present to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, to provide information about

the progress made since the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on reinforcing the exchange of information and extending collaboration between the organs of the United Nations dealing with human rights and regional organizations in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-seventh session a report on the state of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, to formulate concrete proposals and recommendations on ways and means to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the field of human rights and to include therein the results of action taken in pursuance of the present resolution;

15. Decides to consider this question further at its fifty-seventh session.

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