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Agenda item 102

REPORTING OBLIGATIONS OF STATES PARTIES TO UNITED NATIONS
CONVENTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Finland,
Germany, Federal Republic of, Italy, Jamaica, Morocco, Netherlands,
Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and
Venezuela: draft resolution

Reporting obligations under United Nations instruments
in the field of human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 41/121 of 4 December 1986 and other relevant resolutions,

Reiterating the fundamental importance which it attaches to the fulfilment of reporting obligations under international instruments in the field of human rights,

Recognizing that effective periodic reporting by States parties to relevant treaty bodies pursuant to such instruments not only ensures international accountability for the protection and promotion of human rights but also provides States parties with a valuable mechanism by which to take stock of policies and programmes affecting the protection and promotion of human rights, and to make any necessary adjustments,

Expressing concern over the worsening backlog of reports on implementation by States parties of United Nations human rights instruments and over delays in consideration of reports by the treaty bodies,

Recognizing the burden that coexisting reporting systems place on Member States that are parties to various instruments and noting that this burden will become more onerous as further instruments come into force.

Welcoming the decisions of States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1/ (a) to approve the practice of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to consider multiple overdue reports in consolidated form, and (b) to recommend that in order to facilitate the current work of the Committee, as a general practice, after submission of initial reports to the Committee, States parties submit further comprehensive reports on every second occasion thereafter when reports are due, that is every four years, and a brief updating report at each intervening occasion when reports are due,

Reaffirming the importance of providing adequate resources for all bodies supervising implementation of United Nations human rights instruments, including maintaining summary records for their proceedings, in particular for the presentation and consideration of periodic reports by States parties,

Reaffirming also the independent, expert character of the treaty bodies,

1. Urges States parties to United Nations Human Rights instruments with overdue reports to make every effort to present their reports as soon as possible and to take advantage of opportunities whereby such reports can be consolidated;
2. Invites the States parties to United Nations human rights instruments to review the processes followed in the preparation of their periodic reports with a view to ensuring full compliance with relevant guidelines, improving the quality of description and analysis, and limiting reports to a reasonable length;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to revise as a matter of priority and in consultation with the treaty bodies, the draft compilation of general guidelines elaborated by the various supervisory bodies and the list of articles dealing with related rights under the United Nations human rights instruments, and to include in the guidelines, where appropriate, the general comments of the supervisory bodies in order to assist States parties in compiling reports;
4. Further requests the Secretary-General:
 - (a) To propose a draft agenda for the meeting of the persons chairing the treaty bodies to be held in New York in October 1988 which reflects the following objectives:
 - (i) To give priority attention to consideration of remedial measures, including co-ordinated action when appropriate, to deal with the problems highlighted in the reports of the Secretary-General, 2/
 - (ii) To give further consideration to harmonizing and consolidating reporting guidelines on the basis of the suggestions in the above-mentioned reports, with a view to providing clearer and more comprehensive guidelines for more concise reporting by States parties;

1/ Resolution 2106 A (XX).

2/ A/40/600 and Add.1; A/41/510.

- (iii) To identify and develop possible projects for technical advisory services with a view to assisting States parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations;
- (iv) To explore ways of expediting consideration of periodic reports such as by imposing time limits on oral interventions, avoiding duplication in questioning, requesting supplementary written material, and encouraging States parties to submit reports that are as succinct as possible;
- (b) To circulate a draft agenda for this meeting to the treaty bodies to enable comment and to facilitate preparations;
- (c) To submit a report on this meeting to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session;
5. Invites the persons chairing the treaty bodies to maintain communication and dialogue with each other on common issues and problems;
6. Invites States parties to United Nations human rights instruments to consider at their meetings further ways of streamlining and otherwise improving reporting procedures, as well as enhancing co-ordination and information flow between the treaty bodies and with relevant United Nations organs, including the specialized agencies, and requests the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly of any decisions of the States parties on these issues;
7. Welcomes the efforts of the treaty bodies to rationalize reporting procedures and to scrutinize periodic reports more intensively and expeditiously;
8. Invites the Committee against Torture when established to give due attention to the issues raised in the present resolution when developing arrangements for periodic reporting by States parties;
9. Requests the Economic and Social Council to consider rearranging the periodicity of reporting under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; 3/
10. Requests the Secretary-General to provide from official United Nations sources a compilation of statistics relevant to the consideration by the treaty bodies of the reports of States parties;
11. Requests the Secretary-General to strengthen co-ordination between the Centre for Human Rights and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat in relation to the implementation of human rights treaties and servicing treaty bodies;
12. Requests the Secretary-General to arrange, within existing resources and priorities of the programme of advisory services, further training courses for those regions experiencing the most serious difficulties in relation to meeting reporting obligations under United Nations human rights instruments;

13. Invites specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies to assist the Secretary-General in the above-mentioned endeavours and to develop complementary training activities in this field;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the annual reports of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee against Torture are made available to all the members of these bodies;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the text of the present resolution to all members of the treaty bodies as expeditiously as possible;

16. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-third session as a separate item, the item entitled "Reporting obligations of States parties to the United Nations instruments on human rights".
