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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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QUESTION OF THE REALIZATION IN ALL COUNTRIES OF THE ECONOMIC
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS CONTAINED IN THE UNIVERSAL
DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT
ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, AND STUDY OF SPECIAL
PROBLEMS WHICH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FACE IN THEIR
EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THESE HUMAN RIGHTS

STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Note verbale dated 17 February 1988 from the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria
to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Centre for Human
Rights transmitting a joint statement from Bulgaria, the Byelorussian
Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic
Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist
Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva and has the honour to transmit a joint statement of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, the People's Republic of Hungary, the People's Republic of Poland, the Socialist Republic of Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with the request that it be circulated as an official document of the forty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda items 8 and 18.

Annex

JOINT STATEMENT BY SOCIALIST COUNTRIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE
CELEBRATION OF THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF
THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

On behalf of the delegations of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I have the honour to make a joint statement in connection with the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the United Nations calendar, so rich in dates, events and anniversaries, each year the 10th of December is celebrated as Human Rights Day. This year, the celebration of the day assumes special significance, for it was 40 years ago that the General Assembly of the then recently founded United Nations adopted a resolution which constitutes its first programme in the social and humanitarian field - the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Drawn up in the early post-war years, the Declaration reflects the results of the Second World War - the progressive spirit of the anti-Fascist struggle and the beginning of the collapse of the colonial system, the democratic ideas of the international community, which had survived the horrors of fascism and nazism and which was firmly determined to do every thing possible "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small". The sincere desire of the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations to safeguard and expand co-operation between different States in the post-war world is a testimony to the triumph of humane and democratic principles over the man-hating ideology of nazism and fascism.

Today, as we approach the fortieth anniversary, we see even more clearly that the Universal Declaration is an international document of abiding significance for democracy in general. The historic contribution of the Declaration is primarily the fact that it became the starting-point for the preparation of the International Covenants on Human Rights and together with them created a generally recognized basis in international law for the further development of international co-operation in the field of human rights.

In addition to the International Covenants on Human Rights, there has been created during the well-nigh 40 years since the adoption of the Declaration a diversified but solid machinery for co-operation among States on the basis of binding international instruments - the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention against Torture, etc. The socialist countries took a very active part in the preparation of these instruments and mechanisms and are parties to all the main international treaties on human rights. In the

process of their preparation the socialist countries contributed a series of constructive proposals aimed at ensuring the inseparability of the whole complex of human rights and freedoms.

The countries of the socialist community attach great importance to the universalization of international human-rights instruments, since this is a prerequisite for the full and effective implementation both of civil and political and of economic, social and cultural human rights aimed at doing away with the gross and mass violations of human rights in various parts of the world as a result of policies of colonialism, neocolonialism, racism, apartheid, occupation and aggression, flouting of the rights of peoples to self-determination, etc. In today's complex and interdependent world human rights questions on a global scale - and in particular the problem of mankind's survival - are inseparably linked with all aspects of international relations - from disarmament and economic questions down to ecological problems. All of these aspects of the whole range of international relations need to be democratized and humanized. The achievement of that objective requires a new political thinking that would break down the prejudices and stereotypes which have built-up over so many years, do away with mistrust and hatred, and bring out the senselessness of using human rights issues for tendentious and politically motivated purposes which go far beyond the lofty humanitarian principles underlying the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

That is why the socialist countries again declare their readiness for co-operation in the humanitarian field today considering such co-operation an integral, inseparable part of the Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security, which we urge all the world's nations to accept. In our opinion, the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a good way of emphasizing that appeal.

At its forty-first session, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution inviting all member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to mark this date in an appropriate manner. The resolution contains a list of recommended measures for the celebration of the anniversary. At its last session, the forty-second, the General Assembly again unanimously confirmed its invitation to all countries and organizations.

The socialist countries support the above-mentioned resolutions and will respond to the invitation of the United Nations. The measures recommended in those resolutions are consistent with the policies and practices of the socialist countries in the social and humanitarian field, which aim at an ever greater democratization ensuring the direct participation of every person in socio-political and economic life for the full and effective implementation of the whole complex of rights and freedoms in their entirety and inseparability.

The measures included in United Nations General Assembly resolutions 41/150 and 42/131 represent only a model list of possible activities in connection with the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In our view, this list can be enriched and diversified, both at the international and the regional and national levels, for it is precisely this that serves to manifest one of the characteristic features of international co-operation on human rights - its close links to national policies and regional measures in the social and humanitarian field.

This also constitutes the desire of the socialist countries - to expand and intensify international co-operation on a firm and sincere basis for the good of the individual and of mankind as a whole.

I request that this statement be distributed as an official document under agenda items 8 and 18 of the forty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights.