

739 (VIII). Development of the work of the United Nations for wider observance of, and respect for, human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world

The General Assembly,

Considering that, under Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter, the Members of the United Nations have pledged themselves to take joint and separate action to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Desiring to advance as rapidly as possible respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms and to stimulate Member States to press forward toward attaining the goals set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Noting that the Commission on Human Rights, at its ninth session, considered three draft resolutions⁹ concerning the development of the work of the United Nations for wider observance of, and respect for, human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world,

Noting that the Economic and Social Council, in resolution 501 C (XVI) of 3 August 1953, requested Member States and specialized agencies to submit their comments on the draft resolutions and the amendments thereto to the Secretary-General in so far as possible by 1 October 1953,

Requests the Economic and Social Council to ask the Commission on Human Rights:

(a) To consider, at its tenth session, the three draft resolutions concerning the development of the work of the United Nations for wider observance of, and respect for, human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world, and to prepare, if possible, to supplement the provisions of the Covenants on Human Rights, recommendations thereon, in order that these recommendations may be considered by the Economic and Social Council at its eighteenth session;

(b) To take account, at its tenth session, of the comments made by Member States and specialized agencies and of the views expressed on this subject at the eighth session of the General Assembly.

*460th plenary meeting,
28 November 1953.*

740 (VIII). Evidence of existence of forced labour

The General Assembly,

Recalling the determination of the peoples of the United Nations under the Charter to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person,

Regretting that the Economic and Social Council at its sixteenth session was unable to consider the conclusions contained in the report¹⁰ of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour,

Considering that systems of forced labour constitute a serious threat to fundamental human rights and jeopardize the freedom and status of workers in contravention of the obligations and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations,

Observing that the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour has now been placed on the agenda of the seventeenth session of the Economic and Social Council and of the 123rd session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office,

Considering that in view of this delay there is still time for certain governments which have not yet done so to provide information in response to the *Ad Hoc* Committee's request for comments and observations on the allegations concerning them,

1. *Affirms* the importance which it attaches to the abolition of all systems of forced or "corrective" labour, whether employed as a means of political coercion or punishment for holding or expressing political views or on such a scale as to constitute an important element in the economy of a country;

2. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council and the International Labour Organisation, as a matter of urgency, to give early consideration to the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour at their next sessions with this aim in view;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consult with governments which have not yet found it possible to provide information in response to the *Ad Hoc* Committee's request to the effect that they submit such information before the seventeenth session of the Economic and Social Council so that these replies may be brought to the attention of the Council;

4. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to report on forced labour to the General Assembly at its ninth session.

*468th plenary meeting,
7 December 1953.*

741 (VIII). Measures for the peaceful solution of the problem of prisoners of war

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 427 (V) of 14 December 1950 on measures for the peaceful solution of the problem of prisoners of war,

Reaffirming its belief that all prisoners having originally come within the control of the Allied Powers as a consequence of the Second World War should either have been repatriated long since or have been otherwise accounted for as required both by recognized standards of international conduct and the Geneva Convention¹¹ of 1949 relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, and by specific agreements between the Allied Powers,

Having examined the progress report¹² to the Secretary-General on the work of the *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War,

1. *Notes with satisfaction* that some progress has taken place in the repatriation of prisoners of war in the course of the last two years, and expresses the hope that those governments and Red Cross Societies which have contributed to that progress will continue their efforts;

2. *Reiterates* its grave and continuing concern at the evidence that large numbers of prisoners taken in the course of the Second World War have not yet been repatriated or otherwise accounted for;

⁹ See documents E/CN.4/L.266/Rev.2, E/CN.4/L.267/Rev.1 and E/CN.4/L.268.

¹⁰ See document E/2431.

¹¹ See *Treaty Series, Treaties and international agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat of the United Nations*, Volume 75, 1950, No. 972, page 135.

¹² See document A/2482.

3. *Urgently appeals* to all governments and authorities which continue to hold prisoners of the Second World War to act in conformity with the recognized standards of international conduct and with the above-mentioned international agreements and the Geneva Convention of 1949 which require that, upon the cessation of active hostilities, all prisoners should, with the least possible delay, be given an unrestricted opportunity of repatriation;

4. *Expresses its sincere appreciation* to the *Ad Hoc* Commission on Prisoners of War for its efforts to assist in a solution of the problem of prisoners of war; and requests the Commission to continue its efforts to assist in a solution of the problem of prisoners of war under the terms of reference contained in General Assembly resolution 427 (V) of 14 December 1950;

5. *Notes with satisfaction* that a large amount of valuable information was made available to the *Ad Hoc* Commission concerning prisoners of war; but notes with concern that certain governments and authorities mentioned in the report of the Commission have so far refused to co-operate with the Commission,

which refusal represents the main obstacle by which the best efforts of the Commission have been frustrated;

6. *Urgently appeals* to all governments and authorities which have not already done so to give their full co-operation to the *Ad Hoc* Commission to supply the information requested by it on all prisoners of the Second World War who are still under their control and on such prisoners who have died while under their control; and to grant the Commission access to areas in which such prisoners are detained;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to furnish the *Ad Hoc* Commission with the staff and facilities necessary for the effective accomplishment of its task;

8. *Requests* the *Ad Hoc* Commission to report as soon as practicable the results of its further work and possible suggestions to the Secretary-General for transmission to the Members of the United Nations.

*468th plenary meeting,
7 December 1953.*