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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION
OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE VIENNA DECLARATION AND
PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Report of the Third Committee (Part V)*

Rapporteur: Ms. Victoria SANDRU (Romania)

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 20 September 1996, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-first session the item entitled "Human rights questions: comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.
2. The Committee considered the item jointly with sub-items 110 (b), (c) and (e) at its 38th to 49th, 52nd and 54th meetings, on 14, 15, 18 to 22, 26 and 27 November 1996. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/51/SR.38-49, 52 and 54).
3. For the documents before the Committee under this item, see A/51/619.
4. At the 38th meeting, on 14 November, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights made an introductory statement (see A/C.3/51/SR.38).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.3/51/L.67

5. At the 52nd meeting, on 26 November, the representative of Austria, on behalf of Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria,

* The report of the Committee on agenda item 110 will be issued in six parts, under the symbol A/51/619 and Add.1-5.

Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela and Zambia, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action" (A/C.3/51/L.67). Subsequently, Andorra, the Bahamas, Cambodia, the Congo, Ecuador, the Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Mongolia, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At the same meeting, the representative of Austria orally revised the draft resolution by deleting operative paragraph 7, which read:

"Reiterates the request of the Conference that immediate steps be taken to increase substantially the resources for the human rights programme from within existing and future regular budgets of the United Nations".

7. At its 54th meeting, on 27 November, the Committee adopted the draft resolution, as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 9).

B. Draft decision

8. At its 45th meeting, on 20 November, on the proposal of the Chairperson, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that agenda item 110 (d) be kept open in order to allow the Working Group of the Third Committee to continue its work (see para. 10).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

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

Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the
Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 48/121 of 20 December 1993, in which it endorsed the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,¹ adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, as well as its subsequent resolutions on this matter,

Reaffirming the view of the World Conference on Human Rights that the promotion and protection of human rights is a matter of priority for the international community,

Considering that the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms is one of the basic purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and one of the main priorities of the Organization,

Convinced that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action has to be translated into effective action by States, the competent United Nations organs and organizations and other organizations concerned, including non governmental organizations,

Recognizing the importance of dialogue and cooperation between Governments and non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights,

Recalling the request of the Conference to the Secretary-General and the General Assembly to take immediate steps to increase substantially the resources for the human rights programme from within the existing and future regular budgets of the United Nations,

Recalling also part II, paragraph 100, of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in which the World Conference on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to invite, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all States and all organs and agencies of the United Nations system related to human rights to report to him on the progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, through the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council,

Recalling further that regional and, as appropriate, national human rights institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations, may present their views to the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and that special attention should be paid to assessing the progress towards the goal of universal ratification of international human rights treaties and protocols adopted within the framework of the United Nations,

¹ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

Recalling that in its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993 the General Assembly decided to create the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as the United Nations official with principal responsibility for United Nations human rights activities, including coordination of the human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system,

Noting that, at the first regular session of 1994 of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, in April 1994, the executive heads of all United Nations agencies discussed the implications of the results of the Conference for their respective programmes and committed themselves to supporting the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the coordination of the United Nations organs, bodies and the specialized agencies whose activities deal with human rights, as set out in resolution 48/141,

Recognizing that the interdependence of democracy, development and respect for human rights, as stated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, requires a comprehensive and integrated approach to the promotion and protection of human rights and that adequate inter-agency cooperation and coordination are essential in order to ensure such a fully integrated approach throughout the United Nations system,

Noting that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has established a permanent dialogue with the United Nations programmes and agencies whose activities deal with human rights in order to maintain systematic exchanges of information, experience and expertise,

Welcoming the fact that the call of the World Conference on Human Rights for a United Nations system-wide approach to human rights issues has been reflected in the recommendations of major international conferences organized by the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields,

Noting the ongoing efforts to ensure a coordinated follow-up to major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields,

Recalling that each year the Economic and Social Council shall carry out, within the framework of its coordination segment, a review of cross-cutting themes common to major international conferences and/or contribute to an overall review of the implementation of the programme of action of a United Nations conference, in accordance with agreed conclusions 1995/1 of the Economic and Social Council,²

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,³ in particular chapter IX, entitled "1998: Human Rights Year",

1. Reaffirms the importance of the promotion of universal respect for, and observance and protection of, all human rights and fundamental freedoms in

² See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/50/3), chap. III, para. 22.

³ Ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 36 (A/51/36).

accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as expressed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;

2. Also reaffirms the views of the World Conference on Human Rights on the urgency of eliminating denials and violations of human rights;

3. Recognizes that the international community should devise ways and means to remove current obstacles and meet the challenges to the full realization of all human rights and to prevent the continuation of human rights violations resulting therefrom throughout the world;

4. Calls upon all States to take further action with a view to the full realization of all human rights in the light of the recommendations of the Conference;

5. Urges all States to continue to give widespread publicity to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, including through training programmes, human rights education and public information, in order to promote increased awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

6. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights and other organs and bodies of the United Nations system related to human rights to take further action with a view to the full implementation of all the recommendations of the Conference;

7. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to coordinate the human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system, as set out in resolution 48/141, including through a permanent dialogue with the United Nations agencies and programmes whose activities deal with human rights;

8. Invites the Administrative Committee on Coordination to continue to discuss the implications of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action for the United Nations system, with the participation of the High Commissioner;

9. Takes note of the intention of the High Commissioner to invite all States and all organs and agencies of the United Nations system related to human rights to carry out a thorough evaluation of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, as part of the five-year review foreseen in part II, paragraph 100, of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;

10. Welcomes the inter-agency consultations of the High Commissioner with all United Nations programmes and agencies whose activities deal with human rights for the preparations of the 1998 five-year review, and calls upon them to contribute actively to this process;

11. Encourages regional and national human rights institutions as well as non-governmental organizations to present, on this occasion, their views on the progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;

12. Welcomes and supports Economic and Social Council decision 1996/283 of 24 July 1996, in which the Council endorsed the recommendation of the Commission on Human Rights to consider devoting the coordination segment at its substantive session of 1998 to the question of the coordinated follow-up to, and implementation of, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action as part of the 1998 five-year review foreseen in part II, paragraph 100, of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;

13. Requests the High Commissioner to continue to report on the measures taken and the progress achieved in the comprehensive implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in particular concerning the preparation of the 1998 five-year review;

14. Decides to consider this question at its fifty-second session under the sub-item entitled "Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action".

10. The Third Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Working Group of the Third Committee

The General Assembly decides that agenda item 110 (d), entitled "Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action", be kept open in order to allow the Working Group of the Third Committee to continue its work.
