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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

Angola, Benin, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea*, Ghana*, Haiti*, Iran (Islamic Republic of)*, Iraq*, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*, Nigeria*, Philippines, Sudan*, Syrian Arab Republic*, United Republic of Tanzania* and Venezuela: draft resolution

Effects on the full enjoyment of human rights of the economic adjustment policies arising from foreign debt and, in particular, on the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development

The Commission on Human Rights

Recalling that the purpose of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the full promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights,

Bearing in mind that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 32/130 of 16 December 1977,

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

Reaffirming the Declaration on Social Progress and Development proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 2542 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969 and the Declaration on the Right to Development adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986,

Bearing in mind all resolutions adopted in this regard by the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,

Recognizing that the activities of the various organizations in the United Nations system should be closely interrelated and that it is necessary to draw on all the efforts made in the various disciplines related to the human person in order to promote all human rights effectively,

Aware that the serious problem of the external debt burden remains one of the most critical factors adversely affecting economic and social development and living standards in many developing countries, with serious effects of a social nature,

Concerned about the repercussions of structural adjustment programmes on the realization and full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights,

Recognizing the need to address the obstacles that impede the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development and the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights all over the world,

Aware of the fact that the Working Group on the Right to Development identified the problem of foreign debt as one of the obstacles to development and, consequently, to the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development,

Deeply concerned that the debt-service obligations remain high, that the factors determining the capacity to pay have not moved in consonance with the debt-service obligations of the majority of developing countries and that the prospects for reducing the adverse effects of the debt burden on the development process in developing countries continue to be uncertain,

Noting that developing countries still meet their debt obligations at considerable cost to their economies,

Noting with regret the negative effects of the policies adopted to face situations of external debt burden on the realization and enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights,

Stressing that the present international economic order continues to be unfair and needs to be transformed,

Stressing also that measures for debt reduction need to be accompanied by vigorous measures aimed at improving the international economic environment in order to facilitate the growth and development of developing countries,

Considering that the new strategies for solving the debt problem, of both official and private origin, require policies of economic adjustment accompanied by growth and development and that it is essential, within those policies, to give priority consideration in their implementation to human conditions, including standards of living, housing, health, food, education and employment of the population, especially among the most vulnerable and low-income groups,

Taking into account the particular concern expressed by the General Assembly at the growing deterioration of living conditions of the large majority of people in the developing world, at its negative effects on the full enjoyment of human rights and especially at the very serious economic situation of the African continent and at the terrible effects of the heavy burden of external debt on the developing countries,

Recalling all its resolutions related to the debt crisis,

Taking into account the reports submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with its resolutions 1994/11 and 1995/13 (E/CN.4/1995/25 and Add.1 and 2 and E/CN.4/1996/22),

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General submitted in accordance with its resolution 1995/13;

2. Stresses the importance of continuing to implement immediate actions for alleviating the debt and debt-service burdens of developing countries with external debt problems in the framework of the realization of economic, social and cultural rights;

3. Emphasizes the need for additional debt-reduction measures, in particular, cancellation or partial reduction of the official debt or debt service, and for an urgent solution to the commercial and multilateral debt owed by developing countries, taking into account the needs of debtor countries;

4. Stresses the need for new financial flows to debtor developing countries;

5. Urges creditor countries and multilateral financial institutions to continue to extend concessional financial assistance in order to support the

implementation by the developing countries of their economic reform programmes that enable them to achieve adequate technological and productive progress, to extricate themselves from debt overhang, to obtain economic growth and development and to compensate, in some measure, the developing countries that meet their obligations at considerable cost to their economies;

6. Affirms that debt repayments should not take precedence over the basic rights of the people of debtor countries to food, shelter, clothing, employment, health services and a healthy environment;

7. Stresses that foreign debt continues to be one of the major obstacles to the realization of the right to development;

8. Requests the Working Group on the Right to Development to continue its work, paying special attention to the social repercussions of the policies adopted to face the effects of external debt on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and to make recommendations in this regard;

9. Recognizes that there is a need for more transparency in the activities of international financial institutions;

10. Requests the international financial institutions to report periodically to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the social repercussions of their policies on the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights in the developing countries;

11. Considers that, in order to find a durable solution to the debt crisis, there is a need for a political dialogue within the United Nations system between creditor and debtor countries, based on the principle of shared responsibility;

12. Also considers that this dialogue should contribute to the initiation of an integral process aimed at restructuring the international economic order, with the objective of achieving more equitable and fair relations among all nations of the world;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to continue the efforts to carry out this dialogue and to submit to the Commission at its fifty-third session, after a high-level consultation process with Governments, heads of multilateral financial institutions and specialized agencies, as well as with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, a report on the measures to be implemented in order to achieve a durable solution to the debt crisis of developing countries, so that they may fully enjoy all human rights;

14. Affirms that the process of consultations already initiated by the Secretary-General in accordance with Commission resolution 1994/11 of 25 February 1994 should lead to the convening of high-level meetings at the regional and world levels;

15. Requests the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to pay particular attention to the problem of the debt burden of developing countries;

16. Requests the Secretary-General to establish a programme unit in the Centre for Human Rights for the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights, in particular those related to the debt burden of developing countries and the implementation of the right to development;

17. Decides to continue to consider this matter at its fifty-third session, under the same agenda item.

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