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HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

ROMANIA

[Original: French]

[10 August 1981]

1. Romania is deeply committed to the humanitarian principles underlying the Declaration of the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind.
2. At the present time when increasing importance is being attached to the role and contribution of science as an essential element in the organization and development of modern society, application of scientific and technological achievements and broad and non-discriminatory access to the major accomplishments of human thought are vital for ensuring the progress of each nation, improving the standard of living of peoples and raising the level of civilization of mankind as a whole.
3. There is a close relationship between scientific and technological progress and the promotion of fundamental human rights. Science and technology make an important contribution to improving the lives of individuals everywhere and to realizing the ideals of freedom, peace and prosperity for all peoples. Science and peace are indivisible; scientific and technological achievements must serve the cause of détente, understanding and fruitful co-operation among nations.
4. As one of the finest products of human genius, science must serve man and the cause of his well-being and happiness. That is why, in Romania's view, scientists must do their utmost to ensure that their discoveries are used exclusively for peace, co-operation and friendship among nations.
5. The utilization of scientific and technological achievements for the promotion of human rights is seriously affected by the fact that immense material and creative resources, of great potential for scientific research, are absorbed by the arms race, by the competition to produce weapons which are more and more destructive and are an enormous danger to world civilization and the human race itself.
6. In these circumstances, the implementation of the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the interest of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind requires that research workers, scientists and world public opinion as a whole should be more actively involved in the struggle for disarmament, détente, peace and co-operation. Over and above any differences in political, philosophical or religious views, it is the solemn humanitarian duty of scientists everywhere to make unremitting efforts to ensure that the products of their intellect, the results of their creative endeavours, are not devoted to war and hatred among peoples, but to the cause of building a better and more just world.

7. In view of the fact that, in the decades to come, science and technology will play a decisive part in the progress of States towards modern civilization, the resources allocated to research must be steadily increased. That is why Romania believes that military expenditures should be reduced and a substantial part of the funds released should be used to develop scientific and technological research, with a view to promoting economic and social progress and improving the well-being of peoples. It is therefore necessary to direct the activities of experts and scientific research resources, both material and human, towards these same objectives. In this way, science will fulfil its basic humanitarian role and will increasingly become an instrument for realizing the aspirations of the individual and of mankind as a whole.

8. Guided by this concept, scientific and technological research and the introduction of technological progress in Romania form an integral part of the country's general development plans, drawn up on the basis of broad participation by the people as a whole and approved by the supreme legislative body of the country, the Grand National Assembly. At present, there are some 200,000 persons involved in research and development activities. Research is strongly oriented towards the specific needs of industry and agriculture and towards improved utilization of raw material and energy resources, with a view to modernizing technologies, improving product quality and increasing social labour productivity.

9. Great attention is paid to research directed principally to man and the development of his personality. Thus, in the programme including guidelines for scientific research, technological development and introduction of technical progress for the period 1981-1990 and broad directions up to the year 2000, provision is made for the implementation of appropriate measures to maintain man's full creative forces and the in-depth study of environmental factors and health conditions in life and work. Special emphasis is placed on the improvement of living conditions in urban and rural areas.

10. The national development plans include important provisions designed to further the process of integration of teaching, scientific research and production activities.

11. Over 20,000 foreign students, mostly from developing countries, are studying in Romania and specializing in various fields of science and technology; this will enable them to make a direct contribution to the development of their countries when they return.

12. Romania has concluded bilateral technical and scientific co-operation agreements with nearly 80 countries, thereby providing the necessary legal framework for a series of important activities in the field of science and technology.

13. Guided by its concern to stimulate international co-operation in the scientific and technological field, Romania secured the inclusion on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly in 1970 of the item entitled "The role of modern science and technology in the development of nations and the need to strengthen economic and technico-scientific co-operation among States. This initiative led to the convening and holding of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development in 1979.

14. Romania hosted the ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 which preceded the Conference and which played an active part in preparing the Plan of Action adopted by the Conference.

15. In the context of efforts to establish the new international economic order, Romania works for equitable scientific and technical co-operation which genuinely ensures free access by all peoples to the achievements of modern science and the unimpeded transfer of technology to all countries, especially the developing countries.

16. In Romania's view, it is highly incongruous that a whole series of scientific discoveries and achievements have very limited dissemination and are subject to a monopolistic policy which hampers access by large segments of the world's population to the benefits of modern civilization. The paramount aim of science should be to improve the material, social and spiritual conditions of mankind as a whole. The achievement of this aim calls for the elimination of all discrimination, barriers and restrictions in the propagation of scientific knowledge and free access by all nations, especially the developing nations, to the fruits of the technical and scientific revolution. Science is required to play an increasingly active role in eliminating underdevelopment, utilizing the national wealth of peoples to the best possible effect, developing industry and agriculture, protecting the environment and improving the quality of life for people everywhere.

17. In the light of the foregoing, Romania trusts that consideration of the item entitled "Human rights and scientific and technological developments" at the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly will lead to the identification of further practical measures to implement the provisions of the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind.
