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Thirty-fourth session  
Item 88 of the provisional agenda\*

QUESTION OF A CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its first regular session of 1978, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1978/18 of 5 May 1978, having taken note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 20 (XXXIV) which contained the text of a draft convention on the rights of the child, noted with satisfaction the initiative taken by the Commission at its thirty-fourth session with a view to the conclusion of a convention on the rights of the child and to its adoption by the General Assembly, and recommended to the Assembly that it should consider including in the agenda of its thirty-fourth session, as a priority matter, the question of the adoption of a convention on the rights of the child.
2. At its thirty-third session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 33/166 of 20 December 1978, took note with satisfaction of the decision of the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-fourth session, in its resolution 20 (XXXIV), to continue at its thirty-fifth session, as one of its priorities, its consideration of a draft convention on the rights of the child; requested the Commission on Human Rights to organize its work on the draft convention on the rights of the child at its thirty-fifth session so that the draft of the Convention might be ready for adoption if possible during the International Year of the Child; and decided to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-fourth session the question of a convention on the rights of the child.
3. At its thirty-fifth session, the Commission on Human Rights decided that an informal open-ended working group should be established to consider the question of a convention on the rights of the child. The Working Group had before it the Secretary-General's report on the question of a convention on the rights of the child (E/CN.4/1324 and Corr.1 and Add.1-4) and the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its thirty-fourth session 1/ which contained the text of the draft convention on the rights of the child, as included in resolution 20 (XXXIV).

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\* A/34/150.

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1978, Supplement No. 4 (E/1978/34).

4. The Working Group:

(a) Adopted the present title of the draft convention;

(b) Adopted without change the first preambular paragraph of the draft convention which read as follows:

"Bearing in mind that the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,";

(c) Accepted a proposal to the effect that the first preambular paragraph of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should also be the first preambular paragraph of the convention on the rights of the child; the paragraph read as follows:

"Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,";

(d) Adopted the second preambular paragraph of the draft convention, which read as follows:

"Recognizing that the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights, proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,";

(e) Adopted a text for insertion after the second preambular paragraph of the draft convention, which read as follows:

"Convinced that the family, as the basic unit of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,".

5. In its resolution 19 A (XXXV) of 14 March 1979, the Commission on Human Rights decided to continue at its thirty-sixth session, as a matter of priority, its work on a draft convention on the rights of the child with a view to completing, if possible, the elaboration of the said convention at that session for transmission to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

6. At its first regular session of 1979, the Economic and Social Council, in its decision 1979/37 of 10 May 1979, decided to bring to the attention of the

General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session resolution 19 (XXXV) and chapter XI of the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its thirty-fifth session, 2/ as well as the relevant portions of the summary records of the meetings held by the Second (Social) Committee during the first regular session of 1979 of the Council (E/1979/C.2/SR.16 and 18-25). Accordingly, those documents are before the Assembly at its present session.

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