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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Fifty-sixth session  
Agenda item 18 (b)

### EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS:

#### National institutions and regional arrangements

Albania\*, Angola\*, Argentina, Armenia\*, Australia\*, Austria\*, Bangladesh, Belarus\*, Cameroon\*, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica\*, Croatia\*, Denmark\*, El Salvador, Ethiopia\*, France, Georgia\*, Germany, Greece\*, Iceland\*, India, Ireland\*, Israel\*, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia\*, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand\*, Niger, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Slovakia\*, Slovenia\*, South Africa\*, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden\*, Thailand\*, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Tunisia, Turkey\*, Uganda\*, Ukraine\*, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela: draft resolution

2000/... National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and its own resolutions concerning national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, notably Assembly resolutions 48/134 of 20 December 1993 and 52/128 of 12 December 1997 and Commission resolutions 1992/54 of 3 March 1992, 1998/55 of 17 April 1998 and 1999/72 of 28 April 1999,

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

Welcoming the rapidly growing interest worldwide in the creation and strengthening of independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Convinced of the important role such national institutions play in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in developing and enhancing public awareness of those rights and freedoms,

Recognizing that it is the prerogative of each State to choose, for the establishment of a national institution, the legal framework that is best suited to its particular needs and circumstances to ensure that human rights are promoted and protected at the national level in accordance with international human rights standards,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 (A/CONF.157/23), in which was reaffirmed the important and constructive role played by national human rights institutions and their role in remedying human rights violations and in the dissemination of human rights information and education concerning human rights,

Taking note of the Programme of Action (A/CONF.157/NI/6) adopted by national institutions meeting in Vienna, from 14 to 16 June 1993 during the World Conference on Human Rights, in which it was recommended that United Nations activities and programmes should be reinforced to meet the requests for assistance from States wishing to establish or strengthen their national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Recalling also the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20, chap. I, annex II), in which Governments were urged to create or strengthen independent national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the human rights of women,

Welcoming the strengthening of international cooperation among national human rights institutions, including through the meeting of the Coordinating Committee created by national institutions, held in Geneva in March 1999 in association with the fifty-fifth session of the Commission,

Welcoming also the strengthening of regional cooperation among national human rights institutions, including through the fourth Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, held in Manila in August 1999, the third meeting of European

National Institutions, held in Strasbourg in March 2000, the first Regional Meeting of National Institutions for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Americas, held in Tegucigalpa in September 1999, and the fifth international workshop of National Human Rights Institutions, held in Rabat, Morocco in April 2000,

Welcoming further the strengthening of regional cooperation between national human rights institutions and other regional human rights forums, including the first round table between the Council of Europe and national institutions in Strasbourg in March 2000 and the adoption of a resolution by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on the granting of observer status to national human rights institutions in Africa,

Noting the importance of participation by national institutions in relevant United Nations meetings dealing with human rights, and that a number of national institutions have for some time taken a constructive part in such meetings,

1. Reaffirms the importance of the development of effective, independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in conformity with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993;

2. Encourages Member States to establish or, where they already exist, to strengthen such institutions, as outlined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;

3. Welcomes the support for the creation and development of further independent national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as outlined in article 14, paragraph 3, of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/144 of 9 December 1998;

4. Recognizes the important and constructive role that individuals, groups and organs of society can play, in cooperation with national institutions, for the better promotion and protection of human rights and in this context welcomes the convening by the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, of a workshop on cooperation between non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions in Sri Lanka in July 1999;

5. Welcomes the decisions announced recently by a growing number of States to establish, or to consider establishing, national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the trend towards the establishment of such institutions in developed countries;

6. Endorses the view of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed in its General Comment No. 10 (1998) (E/1999/22-E/C.12/1998/26, annex V) that national human rights institutions have a potentially crucial role to play in promoting and ensuring the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights;

7. Calls upon States, in this context, to ensure that all human rights are appropriately reflected in the mandates of national human rights institutions when they are established;

8. Affirms the important role of national human rights institutions in combating racial and related forms of discrimination and in the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and the rights of the child, and in this context:

(a) Encourages the appropriate participation of national institutions in preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance at the national, regional and global levels;

(b) Stresses the desirability of appropriate participation by national institutions, in cooperation with other mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, in the five-year review of the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995;

(c) Welcomes the involvement of national institutions in activities associated with the tenth anniversary year of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

9. Reaffirms the role of national institutions, where they exist, as appropriate agencies, inter alia, for the dissemination of human rights materials and other public information activities during the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004);

10. Commends the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the priority accorded to the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions, including through technical cooperation, and calls upon her Office to continue to strengthen its coordinating role in this field;

11. Welcomes the consolidation and strengthening of the work of the Office of the High Commissioner in the area of national human rights institutions, and calls for the appropriate allocation of resources necessary for this work;

12. Expresses its appreciation to those Governments that have contributed additional resources for the purpose of the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions;

13. Takes note with satisfaction of the efforts of those States that, through internal legislative mechanisms, have provided their national institutions with more autonomy and independence, and encourages other Governments to follow suit;

14. Welcomes the important work of the Coordinating Committee of national institutions, in close cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner, in assessing conformity with the Principles annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134 and in assisting Governments and national institutions, when requested, to follow up on relevant resolutions and recommendations concerning the strengthening of national institutions;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide, from within existing resources, the necessary assistance for holding meetings of the Coordinating Committee during the sessions of the Commission, under the auspices of, and in cooperation with, the Office of the High Commissioner;

16. Also requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide, from within existing resources and from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, the necessary assistance for international and regional meetings of national institutions;

17. Welcomes the practice of national institutions which conform with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights of participating in an appropriate manner in their own right in meetings of the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary bodies;

18. Also welcomes the decisions to hold the sixth international workshop on national institutions, the fifth Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, the third Conference of African National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and the second Regional Meeting of National Institutions for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Americas within the next year, and encourages national institutions to organize similar events with non-governmental organizations in their own regions;

19. Invites Governments and intergovernmental organizations to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights for the purpose of financing, where necessary, attendance by representatives of national institutions;
20. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Commission at its fifty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution;
21. Decides to continue its consideration of this question at its fifty-seventh session.

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