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ORGANIZATION OF WORK OF THE SESSION

Letter dated 3 February 1983 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva, and Observer at the thirty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights, addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-ninth session

At the outset of the thirty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights, I should like to make the following observations concerning the composition of the Commission and draw attention to the imbalance of its present membership.

1. The number of Arab States Members of the United Nations is 21, in addition to the Palestine Liberation Organization. Of these 21 Arab States, 9 are African States and 12 are Asian States, in addition to the Palestine Liberation Organization; this figure represents one-seventh of the total number of Member States.
2. If this proportion of Arab States to the total number of Member States, namely, one-seventh, were to be applied to the Commission's membership, the Arab States would be entitled to six members on the Commission instead of two as at the present time, namely, Jordan from Asia and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya from Africa. This situation reflects an imbalance which should not be allowed to continue, and is at variance with the rule of equitable geographical distribution applied by the United Nations.

In drawing attention to this shortfall in Arab representation, I should at the same time like to point out that Syria presented itself as a candidate to this Commission last year, but that we did not receive the required number of votes at the Economic and Social Council's last session. That was indeed regrettable, and we will continue to present our candidature as well as that of other Arab States for membership of the Commission until this imbalance is corrected and the Commission's membership truly reflects equitable geographical distribution.

I would be most grateful, Mr. Chairman, if you would arrange to have this letter distributed to all delegations of States members of this Commission as well as to Observers.