



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
LIMITED

E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/L.39  
8 August 2003

Original: ENGLISH

---

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Sub-Commission on the Promotion  
and Protection of Human Rights  
Fifty-fifth session  
Agenda item 4

**ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS**

**Mr. Bengoa, Mr. Chen Shiqiu, Mr. Decaux, Mr. Dos Santos Alves,  
Mr. Guissé, Ms. Koufa, Ms. Motoc, Ms. O'Connor, Ms. Rakotoarisoa,  
Mr. Rodríguez Cuadros, Mr. Sattar, Mr. Weissbrodt, Mr. Yimer and  
Mr. Yokota: draft resolution**

**2003/... The Social Forum**

*The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights,*

*Recalling* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the indivisibility,  
interdependence and interrelated nature of economic, social and cultural rights and civil and  
political rights,

*Recalling also* the reports and studies on the realization of economic, social and cultural  
rights submitted by several special rapporteurs to the Sub-Commission and the Commission on  
Human Rights, in particular those submitted by Mr. Danilo Türk, Mr. Asbjørn Eide,  
Mr. Mustapha Mehedi, Mr. Leandro Despouy, Mr. El-Hadji Guissé, Mr. Joseph Oloka-Onyango,  
Ms. Deepika Udagama, Mr. David Weissbrodt and Mr. José Bengoa,

*Recalling further* Commission on Human Rights resolution 1999/53 of 27 April 1999 and decision 2000/107 of 26 April 2000, and Sub-Commission resolutions 1999/10 of 25 August 1999, 2000/6 of 17 August 2000, 2001/24 of 16 August 2001 and 2002/12 of 14 August 2002 on the establishment of a forum for economic, social and cultural rights, to be called the Social Forum,

*Welcoming* Commission on Human Rights decision 2001/103 of 25 April 2001 authorizing the Sub-Commission to hold the Social Forum during its fifty-third session and decision 2003/107 of 22 April 2003 to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that it authorize the Sub-Commission to convene an annual intersessional forum on economic, social and cultural rights, to be known as the “Social Forum”, for two days on dates that would permit the possible participation of 10 members of the Sub-Commission, to be appointed by the regional groups of the Sub-Commission, and that the Council also authorize the provision of all the necessary facilities for the preparation and servicing of the event, and of Council resolution 2003/... of 23 July 2003,

*Recalling* the holding of the preparatory panel meeting on the Social Forum during the fifty-third and the first meeting before the fifty-fourth session of the Sub-Commission, in which the participants unanimously recognized the need for a new process/mechanism within the United Nations system with broad participation, reflecting the current structure of international society,

*Considering* the new challenges of globalization, of the changes in the international order and of the emergence of new actors in the international, regional and national economic and financial areas,

*Considering* the need to listen to the most vulnerable and their advocates and to ensure a meaningful and effective participation of those who are not heard, and to have a constructive dialogue with officials of international institutions and governmental representatives,

*Bearing in mind* that poverty reduction remains an ethical and moral imperative of humankind, based on respect for human dignity, and especially rural poverty, and noting that the Secretary-General, in his statement to the Council on 30 June 2003, during its high-level segment, said that rural development was rightly the theme of the segment as three quarters of the world's poorest people, defined as those living on 1 dollar or less per day, lived in rural areas and that some 900 million of them drew their meagre livelihoods from agriculture and other rural activities,

*Taking into account* that a human rights perspective is necessary for the fight against poverty, and especially the rights of the rural population, peasants, and pastoralist and fishing communities,

1. *Expresses its satisfaction* at Commission on Human Rights decision 2003/107 of 22 April 2003 and Economic and Social Council decision 2003/... of 23 July 2003 authorizing the convening of an annual intersessional Social Forum;

2. *Reiterates* its decision that the Social Forum shall meet every year with the following mandate:

(a) To exchange information on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and their relationship with the processes of globalization;

(b) To monitor situations of poverty and destitution throughout the world, bearing in mind that they amount to complete and permanent denial of human rights;

(c) To propose standards and initiatives of a juridical nature, guidelines and other recommendations for consideration by the Commission on Human Rights, the Working Group on the Right to Development, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the specialized agencies and other organs of the United Nations system;

(d) To monitor the agreements reached at the major world conferences and the Millennium Summit, and to make contributions to forthcoming major international events and discussion of issues related to the mandate of the Social Forum;

3. *Recommends* that the Social Forum address the following themes, inter alia:
  - (a) The interaction between civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;
  - (b) The relationship between poverty, extreme poverty and human rights in a globalized world;
  - (c) The effect of international trade, finance and economic policies on income distribution, and the corresponding consequences for equality and non-discrimination at the national and international levels;
  - (d) Analysis of international decisions affecting basic resources for the population, and in particular those affecting enjoyment of the right to food, the right to education, the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the right to adequate housing and the right to an adequate standard of living;
  - (e) Analysis of the impact of international trade, finance and economic policies on vulnerable groups, especially minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, women, children, older persons, people living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities and other social sectors affected by such measures;
  - (f) The impact of public and private, multilateral and bilateral international development cooperation on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights;
  - (g) Follow-up of agreements reached at world conferences and international summits, particularly the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, and in other international bodies, concerning the link between economic, commercial and financial issues and the full realization of human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights;
  - (h) Social and economic indicators and their role in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights;
4. *Decides* that the next intersessional meeting of the Social Forum will be held in Geneva on 20 and 21 May 2004 and have as its theme “Rural poverty, development and the rights of peasants and other rural communities”;

5. *Requests* Mr. José Bengoa to prepare a working paper on rural poverty, rural development and the rights of peasant and other rural communities, and other related matters for the next Social Forum and to coordinate with the Secretary-General for the preparation of this meeting;

6. *Decides* to extend an invitation to participate in the Social Forum to non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and other non-governmental organizations outside Geneva, and in particular newly emerging actors, such as smaller groups and rural associations of the South, grass-roots organizations, peasant and farmers' organizations and their national and international associations, pastoralist associations, fishermen's/women's organizations, voluntary organizations, youth associations, community organizations, trade unions and associations of workers, representatives of the private sector, United Nations agencies, the relevant functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the regional economic commissions, international financial institutions and development agencies;

7. *Invites* United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, the relevant functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the regional economic commissions, the international financial institutions, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, special rapporteurs and independent experts, non-governmental organizations, scholars, trade unions and associations of workers to participate in and to submit studies to the Social Forum;

8. *Invites* Governments to participate in the Social Forum with delegations composed of specialists in rural policies, social planning and, in particular, international cooperation programmes;

9. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to seek effective means of ensuring consultation, including electronic consultation, with the organizations of the most vulnerable on the theme selected for the Social Forum, especially videoconferences during March and April 2004, to prepare for the meeting;

10. *Invites* the Social Forum to submit to the Sub-Commission at its fifty-sixth session a separate report, containing a comprehensive and detailed summary of the discussions;

11. *Also invites* the Social Forum to submit recommendations, including draft resolutions, to the Sub-Commission at its fifty-sixth session;

12. *Invites* the Commission on Human Rights to consider the establishment of a voluntary fund to facilitate the participation of grass-roots groups and similar disadvantaged organizations in the Social Forum;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to adopt the appropriate measures to disseminate information about the Social Forum, invite the relevant individuals and organizations to the Social Forum, prepare the two videoconferences before the Social Forum, and take all practical measures required for the success of this initiative.

-----