

UNITED NATIONS  
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GENERAL

E/CN.4/646  
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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Eighth session

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL AND ITS COMMISSIONS

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General wishes to draw the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the question of the organization and operation of the Council and its commission in so far as these decisions relate to the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press, and the future work of the United Nations in respect of the prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and freedom of information.
2. The Council's decisions in resolution 414 (XIII) were based on the recommendations of its Coordination Committee (E/2129), which in turn were based upon the report of the ad hoc Committee on Organization and Operation of the Council and its Commissions (E/1995, E/1995/Corr.1 and E/1995/Add.1). In section B I, paragraph 18 (a) of this resolution, the Council approved in general the principles contained in paragraphs 15-19 of the first report of the ad hoc Committee, which guided the Coordination Committee in the formulation of its conclusions regarding the functional commissions and sub-commissions. (A summary of the ad hoc Committee's discussions on such functional commissions and sub-commissions will be found in E/1995, paras. 29-39, and a summary of considerations relating to the Commission on Human Rights and its two sub-commissions, compiled by the Secretary-General, will be found in the same document, Appendix A, pages 26-29. The Committee also had before it accounts of the terms of reference and the work of the Commission and the two Sub-Commissions in document E/AC.34/5/Add.4.).

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/3. The Council  
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3. The Council decided by resolution 414 B I (XIII), paragraph 18 (f), to continue annual sessions of the Commission on Human Rights, in its present form, subject to a review by the Council after 31 December 1954.

4. The Council decided, after a final session in October 1951, to discontinue the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, until 31 December 1954, its responsibilities to be taken over by the Council, the Commission on Human Rights, the Secretary-General or ad hoc bodies as appropriate (resolution 414 B I (XIII), paragraph 18 (d)). The Sub-Commission held its fourth session in October 1951 and, in its report to the Commission, submitted a draft resolution concerning the discontinuance of the Sub-Commission (E/CN.4/641, Chapter X and Annex I, VIII). The General Assembly at its sixth session adopted resolution 532 B (VI) which invited the Economic and Social Council (a) to authorize the Sub-Commission to continue its work so that it may fulfil its mission and especially to convene a session in 1952; and (b) to take any practical steps which may be necessary for the continuance, within the framework of the United Nations, of the work on prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities.

5. The Council decided to continue the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press in order to enable it, at a final session convened for the purpose when the Secretary-General is in possession of all the necessary documentation, to complete its work on the draft International Code of Ethics for Journalists (resolution 414 B I (XIII), paragraph 18 (e)). The final session of the Sub-Commission is to be held in March 1952.

6. In resolutions 414 B II and III (XIII), the Council deals with the future work concerning prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and concerning freedom of information. In these resolutions the Secretary-General is requested to conduct enquiries among Member States in respect of:

- (a) The items relating to prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and relating to freedom of information, which should be placed on the agenda of forthcoming sessions of the Council;
- (b) Procedures for the preliminary study of those items and for the preparation of reports to provide a basis for profitable discussion of such items by the Council; and

/(c) The lines

- (c) The lines along which the Council might be called upon to continue the performance of its tasks in the field of prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and in the field of freedom of information.

The Secretary-General is requested, after consultation with the specialized agencies concerned (in particular UNESCO), to report to an appropriate session of the Council in 1952 on the results of his enquiries, on his own suggestions and on any that may be formulated by the Sub-Commissions concerned. In accordance with these resolutions, the Secretary-General will submit reports to the Council at its fourteenth session.

7. Attention of the Commission is also drawn to resolution 414 B IV (XIII) of the Council concerning membership of Commissions. Bearing in mind the matter of geographical distribution, and the principle that the membership of subsidiary bodies of the Council should not reflect to too great an extent the membership of the Council itself, while at the same time seeking widest possible expert knowledge and experience for the Commissions, the Council decided that the Secretary-General should inform Member States of forthcoming vacancies, requesting them to indicate upon which commissions they would be interested in serving, and the experience and fields of interest of individuals who might be available to serve if the Member State concerned were elected to the Commission.