



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



GENERAL

E/CN.4/655/Add.3
1 April 1952

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Eighth session
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

DRAFT INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS
AND MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Observations submitted by Specialized Agencies on the Proposed Covenant
on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in pursuance of Resolution
543 (VI) of the General Assembly

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

(Letter dated 22 February from the Acting Director-General
of the Food and Agriculture Organization to the Officer
in Charge of the Department of Social Affairs)

On 14 February you wrote to Mr. Dodd regarding the view of the Food and Agriculture Organization on that part of the Draft Covenant on Human Rights which concerns economic, social and cultural rights.

At the twelfth session of the Economic and Social Council, held in Santiago, the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization made a statement on this subject, the record of which is found on pages 9-11 of E/SR.439. The concluding portion of this statement suggested the inclusion in the Draft Covenant of articles incorporating the following principles:

1. That food is of fundamental importance to human health and well-being and that mothers and children have special needs which must be recognized;
2. That since more than half of the human race is engaged in agricultural pursuits, the rights of cultivators and agricultural workers are of basic importance;
3. That such rights should be so established as to ensure to the cultivator a reasonable return for his labour and invested capital and protect him from unfair conditions and the crushing burden of debt;

/4. That
E/CN.4/655/Add.3

4. That it is the responsibility of those in authority to:
 - (a) ensure that land and water resources are so developed that food can be produced in sufficient abundance;
 - (b) ensure that food is effectively and justly distributed;
 - (c) ensure that knowledge of the value of foods to human welfare and of better methods of production and conservation of food is progressively spread throughout the population.

It would appear that paragraph 3 of Article 19 and Article 25 (ii) of Part III of the Draft Covenant probably go as far as is feasible, in a generalized draft covenant, so far as 1 above is concerned.

With respect to 2 and 3 above, it is difficult for the Food and Agriculture Organization to judge whether provisions to safeguard the rights of cultivators and agricultural workers can be effectively included in the Draft Covenant as it stands at present. The same observation applies to the considerations set out in 4.

It would seem, however, that since Article 27 is designed to protect the interests of industrial and other workers to form trade unions, consideration might be given to the inclusion in the Covenant of an article which would incorporate the basic ideas indicated in 2 and 3 above. Having regard to the very great importance which should be attached both to the conservation and wise utilization of natural resources and to adequate supplies of food for human welfare, consideration might also be given to the inclusion of an article covering the points set out in 4 above.

While we are convinced of the desirability of drawing attention in the most emphatic way to the responsibilities of governments regarding, first, the welfare of cultivators and agricultural workers and, second, of ensuring the wise use of natural agricultural resources and of an equitable distribution of food supplies, we are uncertain as to whether this purpose would be served by the inclusion in the Draft Covenant of articles specifically designed for these purposes.