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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Second regular session of 1989
GENERAL DISCUSSION OF
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL POLICY, INCLUDING
REGIONAL AND SECTORAL
DEVELOPMENTS

Implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (A/44/266-E/1989/65) contains in an annex a summary of replies from Governments to a questionnaire distributed to all Member States by the Secretariat. Subsequent to the completion of the report of the Secretary-General, additional replies to the questionnaire have been received. Summaries of these replies are contained in the present addendum.

Summary of replies received from Governments

2. In its reply, the Government of Bulgaria stated that it regards the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States as a major achievement of the United Nations. The Charter is a basic document that aims at a just and democratic restructuring of international economic relations.

3. Common objectives unite the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions pertaining to a new international economic order and those on building a comprehensive approach to international peace and security and, in particular, international economic security.

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4. The full implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States has yet to be achieved, but is a necessary, desirable and feasible objective. Implementation of the Charter has been hindered by unfavourable conditions such as international tensions, confrontation and growing militarization. Major economic issues could not be satisfactorily addressed and have become chronic problems.
5. In the past two or three years, a qualitatively new international situation has arisen. The process of demilitarization, the growing awareness of interdependence and policies of restructuring pursued by the socialist countries have facilitated the establishment of norms of economic behaviour in compliance with the provisions of the Charter. The policy of new political thinking by the socialist countries has brought to the fore common human values. However, the current favourable political climate has not yet adequately influenced economic relations among States.
6. Bulgaria observes the main provisions of the Charter. It is open to the world and integrates with it by changing its domestic legislation and by necessary action in the field of international relations. A wide range of initiatives to promote good-neighbourliness and improve the general climate in the Balkans is being implemented. Bulgaria has increased its trade and economic relations with developing countries and its assistance for the socio-economic development of these countries. The foreign policy of Bulgaria assists the implementation of the Charter in response to the needs of the developing world. One of its many aspects consists of high-level co-ordination of action undertaken with other members of the socialist community. Of particular importance in this respect is the document entitled "On Overcoming Underdevelopment, for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order", adopted by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty States members at its meeting at Berlin in 1987.
7. Current developments have underscored the growing importance of the United Nations as a unique world centre of peace, security and co-operation. The potential of the Organization should be fully utilized.
8. Bulgaria hopes that in the future the provisions of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States will be fully implemented.
9. The Government of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic stated in its reply that the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States is a significant landmark on the road to restructuring international economic relations on an equitable, equal and democratic basis. The provisions of the Charter have lost none of their relevance.
10. Since the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States was adopted (General Assembly resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974), certain steps have been taken to implement its main provisions. On the whole, however, major objective and subjective obstacles and impediments to the implementation of the fundamental principles of the Charter still remain. These include the differing interests and positions of States and rapid and unpredictable changes in the economic situation. The international community is faced with the tremendous task of learning how to shape and guide development in such a way as to preserve civilization and make it safe and conducive to normal life.

11. United efforts and balance in the interests of all groups are needed if the acute problems facing the world community are to be solved. Only a universal organization such as the United Nations is capable of achieving this. The proposal of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other socialist countries for ensuring international economic security forms part of the search for a consensus on ways of guaranteeing the conditions for stable and predictable development. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is firmly convinced that major steps towards restructuring international economic relations can be taken only if international relations as a whole are demilitarised and if a transition is made from a weapons economy to a disarmament economy. In this regard, Article 15 of the Charter remains as relevant as ever.

12. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is sympathetic to the justified demands of the developing countries, and is seeking to expand and intensify mutually beneficial co-operation with all countries and peoples, on the basis of mutual respect, equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination in international economic relations.

13. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic has consistently advocated implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. The genuine, gradual implementation of the provisions of the Charter calls for vigorous, constant and persistent efforts of the international community to build a new world order. The positive changes now taking place in the international political arena are creating conditions conducive to the implementation of the Charter.

14. In its reply, the Government of the German Democratic Republic stated that the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States was one of the most significant programmatic documents of the United Nations in the economic field. The German Democratic Republic has always supported the fundamental purposes of the Charter. The adoption of the Charter reflected a growing awareness that international economic relations can only be conducted on the basis of general democratic principles of international law.

15. The German Democratic Republic welcomes the fact that provisions of the Charter have been reaffirmed or elaborated further in subsequent decisions of the United Nations. The Final Act of the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) 1/ reflects awareness that consensus and compromise are necessary. The Declaration on the Enhancement of the Effectiveness of the Principle of Refraining from the Threat or Use of Force in International Relations (General Assembly resolution 42/22, annex, of 18 November 1987) demonstrates the intention of Member States to take concrete measures and promote favourable conditions in the international economic environment to achieve international peace, security and justice.

16. The recent reaffirmation and amplification of the provisions and orientations of the Charter show that it remains a valid framework of guidelines for the improvement of international economic relations. At this time of interdependence, it is imperative for all States and peoples to join in efforts to eliminate the dangers threatening the survival of humankind. It is essential for all to engage

in a result-oriented dialogue. This consideration led the German Democratic Republic to submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution entitled "Strengthening the role of the United Nations in the field of international economic, scientific-technological and social co-operation", which was unanimously adopted on 17 December 1985 by the General Assembly as its resolution 40/178.

17. The Charter is inseparably linked with the purpose of safeguarding peace and furthering disarmament. The German Democratic Republic pursues a policy aimed at peace, détente and disarmament. Its decision to take measures to reduce unilaterally its armed forces by 10,000 troops and for cuts in its military expenditure by 10 per cent is a concrete move to create an atmosphere of trust, essential for disarmament measures.

18. The German Democratic Republic has continued its extensive economic, scientific and technological co-operation with developing countries during the past five years. In accordance with the provisions of the Charter, this co-operation is based on principles of sovereign equality, equal rights, non-intervention and mutual benefit, focusing on areas crucial for overcoming economic backwardness in developing countries.

19. The present state of international economic relations demonstrates the continued relevance of the provisions of the Charter, as well as the urgent need for their implementation. The Charter should be retained as a single document and built upon. Thought should also be given as to how certain norms and principles of general democratic international law might be developed further and strengthened or made more specific.

20. According to the Government of Panama, there has been very little progress since 1984 in the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, owing to the conflict between industrialized and developing countries. Some industrialized countries continue to take steps that violate the principles of the Charter.

21. The third world is plagued with measures of economic aggression and of violations of their integrity and sovereignty by the industrialized countries. One example is the case of Panama. Since the end of the first quarter of 1988, Panama has been suffering from the effects of economic aggression by the United States of America. The United States is violating the Panama Canal Treaty. In order to break the nationalist will of the Panamanian people, the United States has introduced a series of coercive economic measures against Panama. Because of these measures the standard of living has declined significantly.

22. The United States, in disregard of article 2, article 16, paragraph 1, and article 24 of the Charter, is using all of its power and influence to change Panama's aspiration to reclaim its legitimate sovereign rights to its territory and resources. The United States, when necessary, bases its policy on force, coercion, threats, blackmail and other unlawful instruments prohibited under article 32 of the Charter and by existing norms of general international law. Further progress in the implementation of the Charter cannot be discussed under these conditions.

23. Panama considers the major obstacles and constraints to further implementation of the Charter to include the following: (a) the deterioration of the terms of trade of the developing countries; (b) the current approach to the external debt problem; and (c) the ambiguous manner in which the developed countries handle the issue of international trade. The developed countries have introduced protectionist laws and closed their markets to developing countries, sometimes for political reasons.

24. Panama does not tolerate measures that run counter to the provisions of the Charter and has taken steps to implement the Charter, including the following: (a) efforts have been made to expand trade relations with socialist countries, in implementation of article 20 of the Charter; (b) at the regional and global levels, Panama has promoted economic co-operation and trade among developing countries in line with article 12 paragraph 1, and articles 21 and 23 of the Charter; (c) various steps have been taken to implement article 16 of the Charter dealing with racial discrimination and apartheid; and (d) in accordance with article 15 of the Charter, Panama has signed the Declaration of Ayacueto and has adhered to a number of multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements.

25. As part of national programmes and measures to promote broader implementation of the Charter, Panama has established the Panamanian Institute of Foreign Trade, modernized its tariff system and expanded and diversified the use of tax payment certificates (art. 4 of the Charter); it also has ratified several international sugar and coffee agreements and participates in international organizations relating to those commodities (art. 6 of the Charter).

26. Panama considers that, if the present obstacles are not removed, implementation of the Charter will be dominated and prevented by international realities. Implementation of the Charter will continue to be difficult as long as there are countries that do not accept the fundamental goal of the Charter, which is the establishment of a new international economic order.

27. The greatest aspiration of Panama is that those States which did not support the Charter adjust their legal structures concerning relations between States and their foreign trade patterns to make implementation of the Charter possible.

28. Panama will implement in good faith the Panama Canal Treaty and will ensure that the provisions of the Charter prevail in this case, taking into consideration that article 2, paragraph 1, points out that every State has and shall freely exercise full permanent sovereignty over all its wealth, natural resources and economic activities.

29. The Government of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic stated in its reply that the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States is one of the most important programme documents of the United Nations in the socio-economic sphere. Together with the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (see General Assembly resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974) the Charter provides fundamental guidelines for the restructuring of international economic relations on a just, equitable and democratic basis.

30. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic supported the adoption of these fundamental United Nations documents. The principles enunciated in the Charter remain as relevant today as they were 15 years ago. Unfortunately, some provisions of the Charter, those primarily relating to the economic duties of States, remain largely unimplemented.

31. The developing countries are experiencing a protracted development crisis. Many developing countries are feeling increasingly vulnerable to deliberate, premeditated actions that damage their economic independence and undermine their sovereign rights. Such actions include boycotts, a variety of sanctions and embargoes and political coercion, among others.

32. Actions by some States to curtail the scale of international economic relations is becoming increasingly widespread. The manipulation of exchange and interest rates leads to increasing insecurity. All such phenomena are in sharp contradiction to the basic principles of the Charter and seriously impede the social and economic progress of the entire world community.

33. The growing economic interdependence of States and the internationalization of economic life impel all States to join forces in a radical overhaul of international economic relations and to design a new, more equitable and balanced structure for the international division of labour.

34. One way to reach these goals is to establish, within the United Nations, a system of international economic security. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic fully endorses the concept of international economic security, which it envisions as a logical and natural extension of the fundamental principles enunciated in the preamble to the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

35. In both its domestic economic policy and international activities, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic adheres strictly to the provisions of the Charter. This is reflected in active and constructive participation in international economic co-operation and in assistance given to developing countries. One of the main tasks of the economic reform currently under way in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic is to increase its trade and co-operation with other countries and broaden its participation in an international division of labour that conforms fully to the provisions of article 6 of the Charter.

36. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic has considerable economic, scientific and technological potential, and in conformity with article 13, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Charter, provides assistance to the developing countries in a variety of ways. Its relations with developing countries are based on the principles of full respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, equality of rights and mutual benefit. Considerable assistance has been provided to developing countries in training skilled workers.

37. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic will continue to observe the basic principles of the Charter, co-operate actively with other countries, provide assistance to other States and make a constructive contribution to the restructuring of international economic relations on a just and democratic basis.

Notes

1/ TD/351, part one, sect. I.
