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REVIEW OF PROGRAMME AND ESTABLISHMENT  
OF PRIORITIES

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its twenty-second session, the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 630 A I (XXII) requested the Secretary-General to produce a further report on the lines of the "Observations of the Work Programme of the Council and on the Financial Implications of the Council's Actions" (E/2903) which he had submitted to that session, such a report to include comments on the work of the functional commissions. The same resolution requested the commissions to pay special attention to further concentration of their activities on major economic, social and human rights problems, as may be appropriate, and to the more efficient co-ordination of the said activities, and to include a special section thereon in their next reports to the Council.
2. The following suggestions are being made in the spirit of the above resolution. They are also inspired by General Assembly resolution 789 (VIII) on the control and limitation of documentation and by the proposal of the Council's Co-ordination Committee endorsed by the Council in its resolution 402 B (XIII) that the Secretary-General should submit to each Commission his suggestions for the Commission's programme of future work. As the study of which they are the result was still in process when document E/CN.4/737 was issued, the latter does not reflect the suggestions made in this paper concerning the Yearbook on Human Rights.
3. At its twenty-second session, the Council considered the proposals of the Commission on Human Rights on annual reports and on studies of specific rights or groups of rights, and the Secretary-General in his observations on the Council's work programme included comments on these proposals. He remarked at the time that the adoption of new arrangements for reporting on Human Rights might make it appropriate to give consideration to the future form and content of the Yearbook on Human Rights

but intimated that some experience should first be gained of the new reporting system. He would, however, like the Commission to consider at this session a specific suggestion which relates to the earlier request of the Commission for the inclusion of a new feature in the Yearbooks of 1955 and 1956 (scheduled for publication in 1958 and 1959).

4. As provided in the Commission's report (noted by the Council in its resolution 586 A (XX)), these Yearbooks should include, in addition to their traditional contents, sections containing statements furnished by Governments on, respectively, the right to be free from arbitrary arrest, detention and exile and the right of motherhood and childhood to special care and of all children to the same social protection whether born in or out of wedlock. This should be considered in the light of the action taken subsequently by the Commission at its twelfth session and by the Council at its twenty-second session on studies of specific rights. The Council in resolution 624 B II (XXII) approved the Commission's proposal to deal in its first special study with the same right which would form the subject of the special feature of the 1955 Yearbook, scil. the right of freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention or exile. Governments were accordingly invited by the Council pursuant to resolution 624 B I (XXII) to include in their contribution to the first periodic report on Human Rights a special section on protection against arbitrary arrest, detention or exile unless they had already submitted a statement on that subject for the 1955 Yearbook.

5. The response by Governments to contribute statements for this new section of the Yearbook has been most heartening; so far fifty-six statements have been received. The number and the length of these statements, however, do present the Secretary-General with the problem of keeping the Yearbook within reasonable limits. The statements received so far would require 280 pages to print. The Secretary-General will endeavour to reduce the size of the regular compilation of the Yearbook from about 500 to 400 pages. Even so, the inclusion of these statements would result in a volume of some 680 pages which the Secretary-General feels would be contrary to the wishes of the Council, expressed in its resolution 303 H (XI), for a Yearbook produced in a form which is easy to handle and at a moderate price.

6. The Secretary-General suggests therefore that the Commission may wish, in the light of the above, to recommend to the Council to continue the Yearbook in its present form, for the time being. It may be recalled that the special committee

charged to study arbitrary arrest, detention and exile, having received the statements submitted by Governments for the 1955 Yearbook, found them "extremely valuable" and stated that "they will be studied and analysed ... with utmost care".<sup>(1)</sup> Consequently the statements submitted by Governments will be fully utilized outside of the Yearbook; they will constitute a major contribution on the Commission's first special study and their essential elements will be covered in that study.

7. With regard to the studies of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Secretary-General trusts that it will not normally be necessary to issue as documents the country reports utilized in the preparation of the studies. These country reports, he submits, serve their principal purpose as working papers and it might, therefore, be sufficient if, after completion of the studies, they were kept available within the Secretariat for consultation by members of the Sub-Commission or the Commission or by other interested parties.

8. ~~During its ninth session, the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities proposed a resolution<sup>(2)</sup> for adoption by the Council which would call for the holding of a second conference of non-governmental organizations interested in the eradication of discrimination and prejudice in 1958. The Secretary-General is not convinced of the value of this proposal, believing it unlikely that such a conference could go much beyond the achievements of the conference held in 1955.~~

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(1) E/CN.4/739, paragraph 5.

(2) Resolution E, and paragraph 217, E/CN.4/740.