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INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social  
and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil  
and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the  
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly by its resolution 2200 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 adopted and opened for signature, ratification or accession the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and expressed the hope that the Covenants and the Optional Protocol would be signed, ratified or acceded to without delay and would come into force at an early date. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to its future sessions reports concerning the state of ratifications of the Covenants and of the Optional Protocol. In response to that request, reports on the status of the International Covenants and the Optional Protocol have been submitted annually to the General Assembly since its twenty-second session in 1967.
2. Both Covenants and the Optional Protocol were opened for signature at New York on 19 December 1966. In accordance with their respective provisions, 1/ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights entered into force on 3 January 1976, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights entered into force on 23 March 1976, three months after the date of deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the thirty-fifth instrument of ratification or accession, and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant

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\* A/33/150.

1/ Article 27 of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 49 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 9 of the Optional Protocol.

on Civil and Political Rights, having received the required number of ratifications or accessions, entered into force simultaneously with that Covenant on 23 March 1976.

3. By its resolution 32/66 of 8 December 1977, the General Assembly noted with appreciation that following its appeal several Member States had acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and invited all States which had not yet done so to become parties to both Covenants as well as to consider the possibilities of acceding to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its thirty-third session a report on the status of the Covenants and the Optional Protocol.

4. As at 1 September 1978, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had been ratified or acceded to by 52 States; the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights had been ratified or acceded to by 50 States; and the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights had been ratified or acceded to by 19 States. In addition, 19 States had signed the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; 20 States had signed the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and 10 States had signed the Optional Protocol. <sup>2/</sup> The list of States which have signed, ratified or acceded to the Covenants and the Optional Protocol, as well as the dates of their signatures, ratifications or accessions, may be found in annexes I to III of the present report.

5. Upon ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Germany, Federal Republic of, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom have made the declaration provided for under article 41 of that Covenant, recognizing the competence of the Human Rights Committee, established under article 28 of the Covenant, to receive and consider communications to the effect that a State party claims that another State party is not fulfilling its obligations under the Covenant. The Committee shall be competent to exercise the functions provided for under article 41 when at least 10 States parties to the Covenant have made such declarations.

6. As regards the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Economic and Social Council, at its first regular session of 1978, had before it reports submitted by a number of States parties, in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant and the reporting programme outlined in Council resolution 1988 (LX) of 11 May 1976, as well as a report submitted by the International Labour Organisation under article 18 of the Covenant. By its decision 1978/10 of 3 May 1978, the Council established, for the purpose of assisting it in the consideration of reports submitted by States parties, a sessional working group composed of 15 members of the Council which are also States parties to the Covenant, on the basis of three members from each regional group. The Council decided also to invite the following to participate in the proceedings of the working group as observers: (a) other members of the Council; (b) States parties to the Covenant

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<sup>2/</sup> See annexes I to III below, foot-note b/.

which are not members of the Council; (c) Member States which express interest in the deliberations of the Working Group; and (d) the representatives of the specialized agencies concerned, when matters falling within their respective fields of competence are considered. The Council also decided to review its decision at its first regular session in 1981, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution and the increase in the number of States parties to the Covenant.

7. The Council, by the same decision, requested the working group to prepare for its consideration recommendations on its methods of work in connexion with the reports of States parties to the Covenant. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the work of the sessional working group, the Council, by its decision 1978/9 of 3 May 1978, requested the Secretary-General to prepare an analytical summary, based on the general guidelines drawn up pursuant to the procedure established by the Council for the implementation of the Covenant, of the reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant. The Council also decided that the working group shall be provided with summary records of its proceedings.

8. The Council, recalling that in its resolution 1988 (LX) it had decided that States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which submit reports under that Covenant need not submit reports on similar questions under the reporting procedure established under Council resolution 1074 C (XXXIX) of 28 July 1965, decided by its resolution 1978/20 of 5 May 1978 to also exempt States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights from submitting reports on similar questions under the periodic reporting procedure established under Economic and Social Council resolution 1074 C (XXXIX).

9. As regards the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Human Rights Committee held its third session at United Nations Office at Geneva from 16 January to 3 February 1978 and its fourth session at United Nations Headquarters from 10 July to 2 August 1978. The Committee has found it necessary, in order to keep abreast of the work, to hold an additional session which will take place at Geneva from 23 October to 3 November 1978. Since the Committee's annual report covering its activities during the calendar year 1978 will be adopted at the end of this additional session, it may not be ready for submission, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session. The Chairman, at the request and on behalf of the Committee, has sent on 1 August 1978, a letter informing the President of the Economic and Social Council accordingly and through him to the President of the General Assembly.

ANNEX I

List of States which have signed, ratified or acceded  
to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and  
Cultural Rights

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Algeria	10 December 1968	
Argentina	19 February 1968	
Australia	18 December 1972	10 December 1975
Austria	10 December 1973	
Barbados		5 January 1973 <u>a/</u>
Belgium	10 December 1968	
Bulgaria	8 October 1968	21 September 1970
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	19 March 1968	12 November 1973
Canada		19 May 1976 <u>a/</u>
Chile	16 September 1969	10 February 1972
China <u>b/</u>		
Colombia	21 December 1966	29 October 1969
Costa Rica	19 December 1966	29 November 1968
Cyprus	9 January 1967	2 April 1969
Czechoslovakia	7 October 1968	23 December 1975
Denmark	20 March 1968	6 January 1972
Dominican Republic		4 January 1978 <u>a/</u>
Ecuador	29 September 1967	6 March 1969
Egypt	4 August 1967	
El Salvador	21 September 1967	

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Finland	11 October 1967	19 August 1975
German Democratic Republic	27 March 1973	8 November 1973
Germany, Federal Republic of	9 October 1968	17 December 1973
Guinea	28 February 1967	24 January 1978
Guyana	22 August 1968	15 February 1977
Honduras	19 December 1966	
Hungary	25 March 1969	17 January 1974
Iceland	30 December 1968	
Iran	4 April 1968	24 June 1975
Iraq	18 February 1969	25 January 1971
Ireland	1 October 1973	
Israel	19 December 1966	
Italy	18 January 1967	
Jamaica	19 December 1966	3 October 1975
Japan	30 May 1978	
Jordan	30 June 1972	28 May 1975
Kenya		1 May 1972 <u>a/</u>
Lebanon		3 November 1972 <u>a/</u>
Liberia	18 April 1967	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		15 May 1970 <u>a/</u>
Luxembourg	26 November 1974	
Madagascar	14 April 1970	22 September 1971
Mali		16 July 1974 <u>a/</u>
Malta	22 October 1968	
Mauritius		12 December 1973 <u>a/</u>
Mongolia	5 June 1968	18 November 1974
Morocco	19 January 1977	
Netherlands	25 June 1969	
New Zealand	12 November 1968	

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<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Norway	20 March 1968	13 September 1972
Panama	27 July 1976	8 March 1977
Peru	11 August 1977	28 April 1978
Philippines	19 December 1966	7 June 1974
Poland	2 March 1967	18 March 1977
Portugal	7 October 1976	31 July 1978
Romania	27 June 1968	9 December 1974
Rwanda		16 April 1975 a/
Senegal	6 July 1970	13 February 1978
Spain	28 September 1976	27 April 1977
Suriname		28 December 1976 a/
Sweden	29 September 1967	6 December 1971
Syrian Arab Republic		21 April 1969 a/
Tunisia	30 April 1968	18 March 1969
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic	20 March 1968	16 October 1973
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	18 March 1968	12 November 1973
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	16 September 1968	20 May 1976
United Republic of Tanzania		11 June 1976 a/
United States of America	5 October 1977	
Uruguay	21 February 1967	1 April 1970
Venezuela	24 June 1969	10 May 1978
Yugoslavia	8 August 1967	2 June 1971
Zaire		1 November 1976 a/

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a/ Accession.

b/ The lists in annexes I to III do not include the signature of the two Covenantants and the Optional Protocol on behalf of the Republic of China on 5 October 1967. In this connexion, see: Note concerning signatures, ratifications, accessions, etc. on behalf of China, in Multilateral Treaties in respect of which the Secretary-General Performs Depositary Functions: List of Signatures, Ratifications, Accessions, Etc. as of 31 December 1977 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.V.6).

ANNEX II

List of States which have signed, ratified or acceded to  
the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Algeria	10 December 1968	
Argentina	19 February 1968	
Australia	18 December 1972	
Austria	10 December 1973	
Barbados		5 January 1973 <u>a/</u>
Belgium	10 December 1968	
Bulgaria	8 October 1968	21 September 1970
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	19 March 1968	12 November 1973
Canada		19 May 1976 <u>a/</u>
Chile	16 September 1969	10 February 1972
China <u>b/</u>		
Colombia	21 December 1966	29 October 1969
Costa Rica	19 December 1966	29 November 1968
Cyprus	19 December 1966	2 April 1969
Czechoslovakia	7 October 1968	23 December 1975
Denmark <u>c/</u>	20 March 1968	6 January 1972
Dominican Republic		4 January 1978 <u>a/</u>
Ecuador	4 April 1968	6 March 1969
Egypt	4 August 1967	
El Salvador	21 September 1967	
Finland <u>c/</u>	11 October 1967	19 August 1975
German Democratic Republic	27 March 1973	8 November 1973
Germany, Federal Republic of <u>c/</u>	9 October 1968	17 December 1973
Guinea	28 February 1967	24 January 1978
Guyana	22 August 1968	15 February 1977

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<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Honduras	19 December 1966	
Hungary	25 March 1969	17 January 1974
Iceland	30 December 1968	
Iran	4 April 1968	24 June 1975
Iraq	18 February 1969	25 January 1971
Ireland	1 October 1973	
Israel	19 December 1966	
Italy	18 January 1967	
Jamaica	19 December 1966	3 October 1975
Japan	30 May 1978	
Jordan	30 June 1972	28 May 1975
Kenya		1 May 1972 <u>a/</u>
Lebanon		3 November 1972 <u>a/</u>
Liberia	18 April 1967	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		15 May 1970 <u>a/</u>
Luxembourg	26 November 1974	
Madagascar	17 September 1969	21 June 1971
Mali		16 July 1974 <u>a/</u>
Mauritius		12 December 1973 <u>a/</u>
Mongolia	5 June 1968	18 November 1974
Morocco	19 January 1977	
Netherlands	25 June 1969	
New Zealand	12 November 1968	
Norway <u>c/</u>	20 March 1968	13 September 1972
Panama	27 July 1976	8 March 1977
Peru	11 August 1977	28 April 1978
Philippines	19 December 1966	
Poland	2 March 1967	18 March 1977
Portugal	7 October 1976	15 June 1978

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<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Romania	27 June 1968	9 December 1974
Rwanda		16 April 1975 <u>a/</u>
Senegal	6 July 1970	13 February 1978
Spain	28 September 1976	27 April 1977
Suriname		28 December 1976 <u>a/</u>
Sweden <u>c/</u>	29 September 1967	6 December 1971
Syrian Arab Republic		21 April 1969 <u>a/</u>
Tunisia	30 April 1968	18 March 1969
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic	20 March 1968	12 November 1973
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	18 March 1968	16 October 1973
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland <u>c/</u>	16 September 1968	20 May 1976
United Republic of Tanzania		11 June 1976 <u>a/</u>
United States of America	5 October 1977	
Uruguay	21 February 1967	1 April 1970
Venezuela	24 June 1969	10 May 1978
Yugoslavia	8 August 1967	2 June 1971
Zaire		1 November 1976 <u>a/</u>

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a/ Accession.

b/ See annex I, foot-note b/.

c/ Made the declaration under article 41 of the Covenant.

ANNEX III

List of States which have signed, ratified or acceded to the  
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and  
Political Rights

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Austria	10 December 1973	
Barbados		5 January 1973 <u>a/</u>
Canada		19 May 1976 <u>a/</u>
China <u>b/</u>		
Colombia	21 December 1966	29 October 1969
Costa Rica	19 December 1966	29 November 1968
Cyprus	19 December 1966	
Denmark	20 March 1968	6 January 1972
Dominican Republic		4 January 1978 <u>a/</u>
Ecuador	4 April 1968	6 March 1969
El Salvador	21 September 1967	
Finland	11 December 1967	19 August 1975
Guinea	19 March 1975	
Honduras	19 December 1966	
Italy	30 April 1976	
Jamaica	19 December 1966	3 October 1975
Madagascar	17 September 1969	21 June 1971
Mauritius		12 December 1973 <u>a/</u>
Netherlands	25 June 1969	
Norway	20 March 1968	13 September 1972
Panama	27 July 1976	8 March 1977
Peru	11 August 1977	
Portugal	1 August 1978	
Philippines	19 December 1966	
Senegal	6 July 1970	13 February 1978

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Suriname		28 December 1976 <u>a/</u>
Sweden	29 September 1967	6 December 1971
Uruguay	21 February 1967	1 April 1970
Venezuela	15 November 1976	10 May 1978
Zaire		1 November 1976 <u>a/</u>

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a/ Accession.

b/ See annex I, foot-note b/.