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GENERAL

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COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN CONSULTATIVE STATUS

Memorandum by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General has received communications containing complaints against governments from certain non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the request that they be circulated as written statements in accordance with resolution 288 B (X) of the Economic and Social Council.
2. Some difficulty has arisen in this connexion regarding the scope of the responsibility of the Secretariat in the matter of consultations with non-governmental organizations and concerning the distribution of written statements submitted by them which constitute or contain complaints against governments.
3. Previous to the adoption of resolution 288 B (X), which superseded resolution 2/3, statements received by the Secretary-General from non-governmental organizations in consultative status, the distribution of which was requested, were distributed.
4. The Committee will recall that the Council, by its resolution 242 G (IX) asked the Committee to consider draft resolution H proposed by the third session of the Commission on the Status of Women which dealt with distribution of complaints from non-governmental organizations in consultative status.^{1/}

1/ Draft resolution H read as follows:

"The Economic and Social Council

Considering that information contained in certain communications submitted by non-governmental organizations granted consultative status by the Council, and circulated in accordance with resolution 2/3 of 21 June 1946, does not depict a true picture of the conditions prevailing in Member States;

Decides to reconsider its procedure for the circulation of such communications in the light of this problem."

The Committee in its report to the Council (E/1619), paragraph 19) stated:
"The Committee considered carefully the problem presented by draft resolution H and came to the conclusion that any remedy which might be proposed would constitute a form of censorship more objectionable than the ill which it sought to cure. The Committee, therefore, regrets that it feels unable to make any proposal to the Council in this respect." The report was discussed at the 363rd to 365th plenary meetings of the Council. Attention is also drawn to the discussions in the Committee at its 67th and 72nd meetings.

5. The Secretariat wishes to bring the matter to the attention of the Committee in accordance with Council resolution 288 B (X), paragraph 35 (g) and would appreciate guidance from the Committee as to the procedure which should be followed in the case of written statements from non-governmental organizations containing complaints, including complaints against governments.
