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PREPARATION AND ORGANIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Wilfried GRODIG (Federal Republic of Germany)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 22 September 1989, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in its agenda the item entitled "Preparation and organization of International Literacy Year" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.
2. The Committee considered the item jointly with items 98, 106, 107, 108, 112, 114 and 115 at its 36th to 43rd, 50th and 52nd meetings, held on 8 to 10, 13 to 15 and 21 and 22 November 1989. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/44/SR.36-43, 50 and 52).
3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it (a) a letter dated 19 July 1989 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/44/409-S/20743 and Corr.1 and 2) and (b) a letter dated 26 October 1989 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/44/689-S/20921).
4. At the 36th meeting, on 8 November, the Assistant Director-General for Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization made an introductory statement (see A/C.3/44/SR.36).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.3/44/L.57

5. At the 50th meeting, on 21 November, the representative of Mongolia, on behalf of Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Costa Rica, Cuba, France, the German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, India, Indonesia, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Mali, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Rwanda, Spain, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Viet Nam, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/44/L.57) entitled "International Literacy Year". Subsequently, Senegal, Guatemala, Guinea, Sri Lanka, Samoa, Côte d'Ivoire, Pakistan, Ecuador and Niger joined in sponsoring the resolution.

6. At its 52nd meeting, on 22 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/44/L.57 without a vote (see para. 7).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

7. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International Literacy Year

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 42/104 of 7 December 1987, by which it proclaimed 1990 as International Literacy Year,

Recalling also that in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1/ and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2/ the inalienable right of every individual to education is recognized,

Mindful of the fact that the eradication of illiteracy is one of the paramount objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade 3/ and should become one of the objectives of the strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade,

Emphasizing that widespread illiteracy, especially in many developing countries, seriously hinders the process of economic and social development and the cultural and spiritual advancement of society,

1/ Resolution 217 A (III).

2/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

3/ See resolution 35/56, annex.

Convinced that literacy, especially functional literacy and adequate education, represents an indispensable element for development and for the harnessing of science, technology and human resources for economic and social progress,

Confident that International Literacy Year will offer a unique opportunity for mobilizing efforts at the national, regional and international levels in combating illiteracy,

Welcoming the programme for International Literacy Year prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Recognizing that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has assumed the role of lead organization for International Literacy Year,

1. Notes with satisfaction the commendable work done by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and its Director-General to ensure adequate preparation for International Literacy Year;

2. Commends those Governments which have established national committees or similar structures for International Literacy Year and which have launched national programmes aimed at meeting the objectives of the Year;

3. Expresses its appreciation to the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system for their contribution to the preparation of International Literacy Year;

4. Notes with satisfaction the active involvement of many non-governmental organizations in preparatory activities for International Literacy Year, in particular the establishment of the International Task Force for Literacy;

5. Welcomes the convening of the World Conference on Education for All, to be held in Thailand in March 1990 under the joint sponsorship of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank;

6. Invites Member States, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to take appropriate measures with a view to achieving the objectives of International Literacy Year;

7. Also invites Governments that have not yet done so to establish a programme of measures for enhancing literacy and functional literacy for the period up to the year 2000 along the lines of the Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

8. Appeals to Governments, economic and financial organizations and institutions, both national and international, to lend financial and material support to local, national and regional initiatives to promote literacy;

9. Requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to give wide publicity to the activities and measures to be undertaken during the Year;

10. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the programme for International Literacy Year;

11. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session an item entitled "International Literacy Year".
