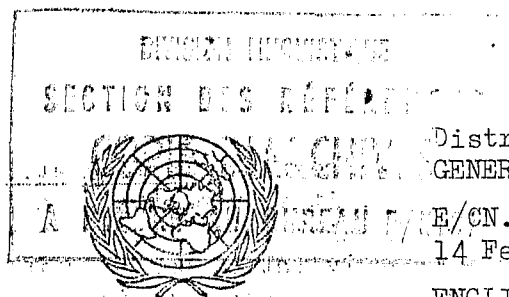


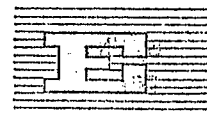
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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Forty-first session  
Item 8 (c) of the provisional agenda

QUESTION OF THE REALIZATION IN ALL COUNTRIES OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS CONTAINED IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, AND STUDY OF SPECIAL PROBLEMS WHICH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FACE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THESE HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING:

POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DEVELOPMENT AND IN THE REALIZATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Study by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Additional replies received in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/31 and decision 1984/131

1. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

FRANCE

[Original: French]

[6 February 1985]

The concept of popular participation merits consideration, since human rights would be meaningless if the individual himself was unable to enjoy, exercise and claim his rights. Popular participation is a concept that affects all aspects of human rights, and it would be well to make sure that this participation, as thus defined, is forthcoming at all levels of the individual's political, economic and social life.

Popular participation is one of the basic pillars of any democratic system. It presupposes the fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international covenants on human rights.

In its economic and social dimension, popular participation can take various forms. Its many facets need to be underlined, since they derive from the great differences between the various social and economic systems existing today.

Although the actual expression "participation populaire" (popular participation) is not much used in French, it is none the less indicative of a highly significant set of circumstances with which French public opinion for the most part is greatly concerned. Policies recently introduced or reintroduced place special emphasis on it. Mention may be made of the support given to initiatives by the citizen in economic matters, in particular the setting up of socially-oriented small enterprises by means of co-operatives or other structures. This embraces the whole of the so-called "intermediate enterprises" sector in which this kind of "participation" is likewise one of the roads to the social and professional integration of young people in difficulty. The principle behind this policy is that the active participation of young people in a small structure which enables them to acquire certain skills and at the same time to earn their living is one of the best ways of ensuring that they will be able subsequently to find a place in society. In this sense such structures are "intermediate" between the economic and the social, or rather, their purpose is both economic and social.

Development of these activities was considered so important that it was one of the reasons for the recent creation, as part of the Government, of a Secretariat of State for Social Economy.

Reference must also be made to the encouragement given to popular participation in the context of social development schemes, particularly in urban areas - for instance, the role played by the National Commission for Neighbourhood Social Development which, faced with several dozen urban areas in difficulty, co-ordinates the activities of the various administrations and provides incentives and active support for efforts by citizens to develop the economic and social life of their neighbourhood. This is particularly true as regards the relations between the population and the educational system: here, a "priority areas" policy covers the areas dealt with by the above-mentioned Commission but involves a far greater number of urban sectors.

Thus the principal underlying action is the same everywhere: greater participation by citizens in the life of the community is necessary both for the smoother running of society and for the fulfilment of the individual. Since this participation has to be free and voluntary, it cannot be imposed by the public authorities. It is, however, incumbent upon those authorities to facilitate and promote it.

Since this reply has taken a long time, I realize that it is too late for these comments to be incorporated into the Secretary-General's report to be submitted to the forty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 8.