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### INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS\*

#### Note by the Secretary-General

1. In resolution 1961 (XVIII), entitled "Designation of 1968 as International Year for Human Rights", adopted by the General Assembly at its 1279th plenary meeting on 12 December 1963, the Assembly designated the year 1968 as International Year for Human Rights and requested the Economic and Social Council to invite the Commission on Human Rights at its forthcoming sessions, with the assistance of the Secretary-General: (a) to prepare, for consideration by the Assembly, a programme of measures and activities representing a lasting contribution to the cause of human rights, to be undertaken by the United Nations, by Member States and by the specialized agencies during the year 1968, in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; (b) to prepare, for consideration by the General Assembly, suggestions for a list of goals in the field of human rights to be achieved by the United Nations not later than the end of 1968; and (c) to submit the programme of measures and activities and the suggestions for the list of goals in time for their consideration by the General Assembly at its twentieth session. On 17 December 1963 the Economic and Social Council, at its resumed thirty-sixth session, decided to transmit the resolution to the Commission on Human Rights.

2. At its twentieth session the Commission, in resolution 6 (XX),<sup>1/</sup> decided inter alia to establish a Committee of thirty-four members, appointed from permanent delegations. All the States members of the Commission, together with the other

\* Item 69 of the provisional agenda.

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 8 (E/3873), chapter VII.

co-sponsors of General Assembly resolution 1961 (XVIII), were invited to appoint representatives to this Committee which would meet prior to the 1965 session of the Commission to recommend a programme of measures and activities to be undertaken by Member States, the United Nations and specialized agencies in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the furtherance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. As part of its terms of reference, the Committee was asked to give special thought to the possibility of holding an international conference in 1968 to (i) review the progress made in the field of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; (ii) evaluate the effectiveness of the methods and techniques used by the United Nations in the field of human rights; and (iii) formulate and prepare a programme of further measures to be taken subsequent to the celebration of Human Rights Year in 1968.

3. The Commission also prepared a draft resolution concerning goals to be achieved by the United Nations before 1968,<sup>2/</sup> and requested the Economic and Social Council to recommend it to the General Assembly for consideration at its nineteenth session. By resolution 1015 E (XXXVII) of 30 July 1964, the Council recommended the draft resolution to the Assembly for adoption at its nineteenth session. The draft resolution was before the Assembly at that session in connexion with item 12 of the agenda, "Report of the Economic and Social Council". The Assembly was unable to consider the item at that session; the Secretary-General therefore wishes to draw the draft resolution to the attention of the Assembly at the twentieth session. The text of the draft resolution is annexed hereto (annex I).

4. At its twenty-first session, the Commission on Human Rights had before it the report of the Committee on the International Year for Human Rights (E/CN.4/886) containing recommendations concerning a programme of measures and activities to be undertaken in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights. In resolution 5 A (XXI)<sup>3/</sup> the Commission proposed that the Economic and Social Council recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution containing

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<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., chapter XI, draft resolution III.

<sup>3/</sup> Ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 8 (E/4024), chapter IV, para. 465.

recommendations concerning an interim programme of measures and activities to be undertaken in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights. By resolution 1074 E (XXXIX), the Council recommended to the General Assembly adoption of a draft resolution on the subject, the text of which is annexed hereto (annex II).

5. At the same session the Commission decided, in resolution 5 B (XXI), to appoint a working party consisting of all States represented on the Commission to elaborate, in co-operation with the Secretary-General, the further observances, measures and activities which the Commission should recommend to the General Assembly to be undertaken by the United Nations in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the proposed international conference on human rights; and requested the Working Party, in preparing its report, to take into account the recommendations in the report of the Committee on the International Year for Human Rights (E/CN.4/886) as well as the discussions on the subject of the International Year at the twenty-first session of the Commission (E/CN.4/SR.844-846 and 848). The Working Party held its first meeting on 17 May 1965.

ANNEX I

International Year for Human Rights (1968)

(Resolution 1015 E (XXXVII) of the Economic and Social Council)

The Economic and Social Council,

Having considered chapter VII of the report of the Commission on Human Rights at its twentieth session,

Recommends the following draft resolution to the General Assembly for adoption at its nineteenth session:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 1961 (XVIII) of 12 December 1963 designating the year 1968 as International Year for Human Rights,

"Recognizing the need for effective measures to be taken at both the international and the national levels to encourage the further development of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

"Reaffirming the belief that the cause of human rights will be well served by an increasing awareness of the extent of the progress made, and the conviction that the year 1968 should be devoted to intensified national and international efforts and undertakings in the field of human rights and also to an international review of the achievements in this field,

"Convinced that an intensification of efforts in the intervening years will heighten the progress that can be made by 1968,

"1. Recommends that all Member States be invited to ratify before 1968 the Conventions already concluded in the field of human rights, and in particular the following:

Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and practices similar to Slavery;

ILO Convention concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour;

ILO Convention on Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation;

ILO Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value;

UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education;

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;

Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

"2. Decides to hasten the conclusion of the following draft conventions so that they may be open for ratification and accession before 1968:

Draft Covenant on civil and political rights;

Draft Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights;

Draft International Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination;

Draft International Convention on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance;

Draft Convention on freedom of information.

"3. Decides to complete by 1968 the consideration and preparation of the following draft declarations:

Draft declaration on the elimination of discrimination in the matter of political rights;

Draft declaration on the elimination of discrimination in relation to women;

Draft declaration on the right of asylum;

Draft declaration on freedom of information."

1338th plenary meeting,  
30 July 1964.

ANNEX II

International Year for Human Rights (1968)

(Resolution 1074 E (XXXIX) of the Economic and Social Council)

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting the report of the Commission on Human Rights on the International Year for Human Rights,

Recalling its resolution 1015 E (XXXVII) of 30 July 1964 on the International Year for Human Rights,

Recommends the following draft resolution to the General Assembly for consideration at its twentieth session:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 1961 (XVIII) of 12 December 1963 designating the year 1968 as International Year for Human Rights,

"Considering that the further promotion and development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms contributes to the strengthening of peace throughout the world and to friendship between peoples,

"Considering that racial discrimination and in particular the policy of apartheid constitutes one of the most flagrant abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms and that persistent and intense efforts must be made to secure its abandonment,

"Reaffirming the belief that the cause of human rights will be well served by an increasing awareness of the extent of the progress made, and the conviction that the year 1968 should be devoted to intensified national and international efforts and undertakings in the field of human rights and also to an international review of the achievements in this field,

"Stressing the importance of further development and implementation in practice of the principles of the protection of human rights laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples and the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination,

"Convinced that an intensification of efforts in the intervening years will heighten the progress that can be made by 1968,

"Convinced further that the proposed international review of progress in the field of human rights can advantageously be carried out by means of an international conference,

"Noting that the interim programme of measures and activities to be undertaken in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights and in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recommended by the Commission on Human Rights and which is set out in the interim programme annexed to the present resolution,

"Noting further that the Commission on Human Rights is continuing the preparation of a programme of observances, measures and activities to be undertaken in 1968,

"1. Calls upon Member States, States members of the specialized agencies, regional inter-governmental organizations, the specialized agencies and the national and international organizations concerned, to devote the year 1968 to intensified efforts and undertakings in the field of human rights, including an international review of achievements in this field;

"2. Urges Member States to take appropriate measures in preparation for International Year for Human Rights, especially to emphasize the urgent need to eliminate discrimination and other violations of human dignity, with special attention to the abolition of racial discrimination and in particular the policy of apartheid;

"3. Confirms the necessity to implement Economic and Social Council resolution 1015 E (XXXVII) of 30 July 1964 concerning the ratification by States Members of the United Nations before 1968 of the conventions already concluded in the field of human rights, the earlier conclusion of the draft conventions referred to in paragraph 2 of that resolution, so that they may be open for ratification and accession before 1968, and the completion by 1968 of the consideration and preparation of the draft declarations listed in paragraph 3 of that resolution;

"4. Approves the interim programme of measures and activities envisaged for the United Nations annexed to this resolution, and requests the Secretary-General to proceed with the arrangements for the measures to be undertaken by the United Nations set out in the annex;

"5. Invites Member States to consider, in connexion with the International Year, the possible advantage of undertaking, on a regional basis, common studies in order to establish more effective protection of human rights;

"6. Invites regional inter-governmental organizations with competence in the field to provide the international conference envisaged for 1968 with full information on their accomplishments, programmes and other measures to realize protection of human rights;

"7. Invites the Commission on the Status of Women to participate and co-operate at every stage in the preparatory work for the International Year for Human Rights;

"8. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the present resolution and the interim programme annexed to the resolution to Member States, States members of the specialized agencies, regional inter-governmental organizations, the specialized agencies, and the interested international organizations;

"9. Commends to these States, regional inter-governmental organizations, agencies and organizations the programme of measures and activities set out in that annex and invites their co-operation and participation in this programme with a view to making the celebrations successful and meaningful;

"10. Decides that, in order to develop further and guarantee political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights and to end all discrimination and denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms, on grounds of race, colour, sex, language or religion, and in particular to permit the elimination of apartheid, an international conference on human rights should be convened during 1968 in order to:

"(a) Review the progress which has been made in the field of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights;

"(b) Evaluate the effectiveness of the methods used by the United Nations in the field of human rights;

"(c) Formulate and prepare a programme of further measures to be taken subsequent to the celebrations of Human Rights Year;

"11. Requests the Economic and Social Council to invite the Commission on Human Rights, in particular, to elaborate for the consideration of the General Assembly the agenda, duration and venue of the conference, to make recommendations in regard to the preparation of the necessary preliminary evaluation studies and other documentation and in regard to means of defraying the expenses of the conference."

1392nd plenary meeting,  
28 July 1965.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS: INTERIM PROGRAMME

I. The theme of ceremonies, activities and celebrations<sup>a/</sup>

It is recommended that the programme of measures and activities to be undertaken throughout the International Year for Human Rights should be calculated to encourage, on as wide a basis as possible, both nationally and internationally, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to bring home to all the people the breadth of the concept of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all its aspects. The theme of the ceremonies, activities and celebrations should be: "Greater recognition and full enjoyment of the fundamental freedoms of the individual and of human rights everywhere". The aim should be to dramatize universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

II. A year of activities<sup>b/</sup>

It is agreed that all the participants in the celebrations should be invited to devote the year 1968 as a whole to activities, ceremonies and observances relating to the question of human rights. International or regional seminars, national conferences, lectures and discussions on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and on other declarations and instruments of the United Nations relating to human rights, may be organized throughout the year. Some countries will wish to stress the entire content of the Declaration, as further elaborated in later United Nations human rights programmes. Some participating countries may wish to emphasize, during particular periods of the International Year, rights and freedoms in connexion with which they have faced special problems. During each such period the Governments would review, against the standards set by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other declarations and instruments of the United

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a/ See E/CN.4/886, paras. 46-52, and Recommendation I (para. 52).

b/ See ibid., E/4024, paras. 53-58, and Recommendation II (para. 58).

Nations relating to human rights, their domestic legislation and the practices within their society in respect of the particular right or freedom which is the subject of that period's observances. They would assess the extent to which the right had been effectively secured and would give publicity to it and make special efforts to promote amongst their citizens a basic understanding of its nature and significance so that the gains already made might not easily be lost in the future. To the extent that the right or freedom had not yet been effectively secured, every effort would be made during the period towards its achievement. In the choice of subjects priority could of course be given to those rights of a civil and political character and those of an economic, social and cultural character.

A. Measures to be undertaken by the United Nations in the period prior to the beginning of the International Year for Human Rights

1. Elimination of certain practices<sup>c/</sup>

Believing that certain practices which constitute some of the grosser forms of the denial of human rights still persist within the territories of some Member States, the Commission recommends that the United Nations adopt and set before the Member States as a target to be achieved by the end of 1968 the complete elimination of the following violations of human rights:

(a) Slavery, the slave trade, institutions and practices similar to slavery, and forced labour;

(b) All forms of discrimination based upon race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social or ethnic origin, property, birth or other status;

(c) Colonialism and the denial of freedom and independence.

2. International measures for the protection and guarantee of human rights<sup>d/</sup>

Measures for the effective implementation of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other declarations and instruments of the United Nations relating to human rights have been under consideration in the

<sup>c/</sup> See ibid., E/4024, paras. 73-77, and Recommendation V (para. 77), as well as paras. 424-425.

<sup>d/</sup> See ibid., E/4024, paras. 93-99, and Recommendation VI (para. 99).

United Nations for many years. The Commission is confident that action on the draft Covenant on civil and political rights and the draft Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, and measures of implementation, and on the other conventions or international agreements in the field of human rights listed in the draft resolution prepared by the Commission on Human Rights in 1964 for consideration by the General Assembly, will be completed before the beginning of the International Year for Human Rights. If, however, by the beginning of 1968, international machinery for the effective implementation of these covenants and conventions or international agreements does not form part of the instruments adopted, international measures for the guarantee or protection of human rights should be a subject of serious study during the International Year for Human Rights.

B. Measures to be undertaken by Member States in the period prior to the beginning of the International Year for Human Rights

3. Review of national legislation<sup>e/</sup>

Governments are invited to review their national legislation against the standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other declarations and instruments of the United Nations relating to human rights, and consider the enactment of new or amending of existing laws to bring their legislation into conformity with the principles of the Declaration and other declarations and instruments of the United Nations relating to human rights.

4. Machinery for implementation on the national level<sup>f/</sup>

All Member States are invited as one of the measures they will undertake in connexion with the International Year, to establish or refine, if necessary by the end of 1968, their national machinery for giving effect to the fundamental rights and freedoms. If, for example, within any Member States, arrangements do not exist which will enable individual persons or groups of persons to bring before independent national tribunals or authorities any complaints they may have concerning the

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<sup>e/</sup> See ibid., E/4024, paras. 116-120, and Recommendation XI (para. 120).

<sup>f/</sup> See ibid., E/4024, paras. 121-129, and Recommendation XII (para. 129).

violation of their human rights and obtain effective remedies, the Member State should be invited to undertake that such arrangements will be introduced. If such arrangements already exist, the Member States should be invited to undertake to refine and improve them. This is not a recommendation that any particular improvement in machinery should be introduced. In one set of circumstances what may be needed is the establishment of a special court; in another the appointment of an Ombudsman or Procurator General or similar official; in another simply the setting up of offices to which individual citizens may bring their complaints. The determination as to what machinery or improvement in machinery is required for giving effect to the fundamental rights and freedoms would be within the sole discretion of the Government concerned.

5. National programme of education on human rights<sup>g/</sup>

Believing that there are limits to the effectiveness of laws in making the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms a reality, the Commission is convinced that a concentration of effort on legal and institutional guarantees of human rights, although it will go far towards the achievement of objectives we seek, will not go all the way. Attention needs to be concentrated, in addition, on means of changing some old ways of thinking on these subjects, and of rooting out deep-seated prejudices in regard to race, colour, sex, religion and so on. In short, it is necessary to embark upon a complementary programme of education, including both adult and child education, designed to produce new thinking on the part of many people in regard to human rights. Accordingly, it is recommended that an integral part of any programme of intensification of effort to be undertaken in the next three years should be a world-wide educational programme in human rights. Such an educational programme would be consistent with the objectives of the Development Decade and also with the objectives in the field of human rights of the proposed United Nations Training and Research Institute. This programme should aim at mobilizing some of the energies and resources of:

(a) universities, colleges and other institutions of higher learning, private and public, within Member States;

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<sup>g/</sup> See ibid., E/4024, para. 130, and Recommendation XIII in the same paragraph.

- (b) the teaching staff of primary and secondary schools;
- (c) foundations and charitable, scientific and research institutions;
- (d) media of information and mass communication, including the Press, radio and television;
- (e) interested non-governmental organizations;

towards the education of the people, adults and children, about the state of human rights in their communities and elsewhere, and about the further steps which need to be taken to secure the fullest and most effective realization of these rights. Member States with federal systems of government are called upon to encourage the activities in the field of human rights of local and state educational institutions.

It would guarantee the success of this educational effort if the national leaders within Member States would give it every encouragement. Within this effort Governments would organize conferences of universities and other institutions of higher learning within their territories and invite them to consider how the curricula and their teaching programmes can be utilized to improve the awareness in the student population of the fundamental questions of human rights, how their research programmes might be directed to this end, and how they can co-operate with other interested organizations, through extra-mural and other programmes, in furthering the aims of adult education in human rights. In this context, studies of local customs and traditions could be undertaken by national authorities with a view to examining to what extent they might be fostering and encouraging attitudes or values contrary to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and how these customs and traditions can be eventually eliminated. Charitable and philanthropic foundations might be invited to consider making grants for programmes of research and study in this field and to make bursaries and fellowships available for research in human rights. Responsible authorities of colleges, and of elementary and secondary schools, could be invited to review their curricula and textbooks in order to eradicate bias, intentional and unintentional, towards the preservation of ideas and concepts contrary to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to introduce courses of study which positively promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has been noticed with appreciation that certain universities have already included in their curricula courses in the international protection of human rights; other

universities could be guided by such programmes and benefit by those experiences. Attention is also called to the UNESCO Associated Schools Project in Education for International Understanding.

Governments might also convene, or give encouragement to the convening of, conferences amongst the radio and television broadcasting services within their territories, inviting them to consider how their facilities might most usefully co-operate with other organizations within the country, and with international agencies, in advancing the effort to educate the people into greater respect for individual rights and fundamental freedoms.

The specialized agencies of the United Nations, especially UNESCO and the ILO, can make a particularly valuable contribution towards the intensification of the educational effort with the co-operation of United Nations regional institutes, bearing in mind Economic and Social Council resolution 958 D I (XXXVI) of 12 July 1963. It is recommended that they should be invited to do so.

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