



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/45/348
17 July 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-fifth session
Item 12 of the preliminary list*

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 43/152 of 8 December 1988, entitled "Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights", the General Assembly, reaffirming that regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights may make a major contribution to the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and that the exchange of information and experience in this field among the regions, within the United Nations system, may be improved, noted with interest that various contacts between regional bodies and commissions and the United Nations had continued to be pursued and strengthened through advisory services and technical assistance activities, particularly those relating to the organization of regional and subregional training courses in the field of human rights, and requested the Secretary-General to continue to consider the possibility of encouraging those developments. The Assembly requested the Commission on Human Rights to continue to pay special attention to the most appropriate ways of assisting, at their request, countries of the different regions under the programme of advisory services and to make, where necessary, the relevant recommendations. Finally, the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to submit to it at its forty-fifth session a report on the state of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights and to include therein the results of action taken in pursuance of that resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

* A/45/50.

II. ENCOURAGEMENT OF CONTACTS BETWEEN REGIONAL BODIES AND COMMISSIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS

2. The United Nations, through its Centre for Human Rights, has pursued and strengthened its contacts and co-operation in the field of human rights with regional bodies and commissions. This co-operation has developed through the exchange of information on matters of mutual interest and through activities carried out under the United Nations programme of advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights.
3. Members of regional bodies and commissions such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Inter-American Commission and Court on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Commission of Human Rights and the Council of Europe took part in training courses and workshops organized by the Centre for Human Rights in various parts of the world. Contacts were also pursued with the Organization of the Islamic Conference.
4. In connection with academic and research institutes, in the field of human rights, it should be noted that the Centre provides the International Institute for Human Rights, based in Strasbourg, France, with staff members for lectures in English, French, Spanish and Arabic for the Institute's annual human rights courses. The Centre also provides staff members to the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, based in San Jose, for lectures. In addition, United Nations human rights fellows spend a period of time every year at the International Institute (Strasbourg) and at the Inter-American Institute (San Jose) to improve their knowledge of the European and American systems. Furthermore, the Centre has provided technical assistance to the Arab Institute of Human Rights, Tunis, through the provision of documents, books and equipment for the Institute's reference library.

A. Africa

5. The Centre for Human Rights continued its co-operation, begun in 1988, with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights of OAU in order to assist it in achieving its main objectives. The Centre had assisted the African Commission by helping five of its members to become acquainted with the monitoring mechanisms and procedures of United Nations human rights organs and treaty-established bodies at the Palais des Nations at Geneva. In 1989, the Centre assisted the African Commission, in co-operation with the Government of the Gambia, in organizing a training course, which was held in Banjul from 24 April to 2 May 1989. Seven members of the African Commission and 22 participants from 15 African countries took part. In particular, the training course focused on international human rights instruments, international human rights mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, the experience of the various countries of the region in the implementation of human rights, the role of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, the role of the African Commission and the scope and nature of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the examination of those activities in a co-ordinated context as they relate to the region of Africa.

6. In 1989, the Centre for Human Rights began the execution of a co-operation project with the Government of the Gambia aiming at strengthening the legal institutions of the country and assisting it in the establishment of the regional African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies at Banjul. The following activities were undertaken: (a) a study was carried out in the course of the year by a consultant in the Gambia to assess the feasibility of setting up the African Centre; (b) during 1989, the services of a consultant were provided to the Gambian authorities to assist them with the revision of their laws; (c) a fellowship was granted to the Director of the African Centre, which permitted him to receive training and to become acquainted with the work of an institution working at the regional European level on the promotion of human rights; and (d) books and documentation on human rights were made available to allow the newly established Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies to provide the necessary services and to assist it in its training activities.

B. Asia and the Pacific

7. The Centre for Human Rights continued its co-operation with the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), with a view to implementing in the best possible way Commission on Human Rights resolution 1989/50. Within this context, the Centre provided the ESCAP library with an initial stock of copies of all of its human rights information and reference materials issued so far, including United Nations Action in the Field of Human Rights, Status of International Instruments, ABC-Teaching of Human Rights, Practical activities for primary and secondary schools, Human Rights Newsletter, the Fact Sheet series and ad hoc publications, including the Application of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights under the Optional Protocol by the Human Rights Committee.

8. The Centre for Human Rights, in co-operation with the Government of the Philippines, organized the Asian-Pacific Workshop for Administrators of Justice on international human rights issues, which was held at Manila from 7 to 11 May 1990. The Workshop brought together a high-level group of senior government officials and experts in the field of human rights from various parts of the world and representatives of Government from the Asian-Pacific region and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in order to discuss various human rights issues.

9. The Workshop, which was opened by the President of the Philippines, Mrs. Corazón Aquino, was addressed by high-level international experts from all over the world. It considered, inter alia, regional and national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and was addressed by representatives of the Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights of OAU, the Inter-American Court and the European Council.

10. Representatives of the following countries participated in the Workshop: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, China, Cyprus, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

C. Europe

11. The Centre for Human Rights is considering the organization of a national training course in 1990 in collaboration with the Council of Europe and the Yugoslav Institute on Human Rights.
12. An Eastern European training course on the administration of justice and human rights was held in Moscow from 21 to 25 November 1988 in co-operation with the United Nations Association of the USSR and with the support of the Soviet Government. Topics discussed included protection of human rights in crime investigation and the prosecution stage, international covenants on human rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (General Assembly resolution 39/46, annex) and other United Nations instruments on the protection of persons subject to detention or imprisonment, protection of human rights in trials in court and appeals and protection of human rights in institutional and non-institutional treatment of offenders. The meeting was attended by representatives of 10 countries.
13. From 27 November to 1 December 1989, a national training course on international norms and standards in the field of human rights was held in Moscow in co-operation with the United Nations Association of the USSR and with the support of the Soviet Government. Topics discussed included the international system for the protection and promotion of human rights, international human rights standards and their application in national legislation: issues and tasks, international monitoring of compliance with obligations of States for the implementation of human rights instruments, international law and mechanism of protection of the rights of persons on the national level, international standards in the field of civil and political rights, international protection of refugee rights and protection of human rights in non-international conflict. The meeting was attended by representatives of Governments, law enforcement officials, members of Soviet faculties of law, diplomatic academies, various institutes, university students and local non-governmental organizations.

D. Latin America

14. A training course for officials from Central American countries on the administration of justice and human rights was held at San Remo, Italy, from 12 to 16 December 1988 in co-operation with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law of San Remo and with the support of the Italian Government. Officials from six Central American countries took part in the course. Lectures were given on the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights, mechanisms for the implementation of the examination of communications, and the basic requirements for the administration of justice, including the role of the police in the protection of human rights. Also, the International Institute of Humanitarian Law received two Colombian fellows from 4 to 15 June 1989 under the Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights.
15. Another training course for Colombian judges on human rights and penal procedures was held in Castelgandolfo, Rome, from 11 to 22 September 1989. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) worked

as the executing agency in close co-operation with the Centre for Human Rights in the organization of the course, which was held under the auspices and with the financial support of the Italian Government through a contribution to the Voluntary Fund. It was designed for some 35 judges selected to become a core of experts for the training of other judges in Colombia. Issues dealt with included modern techniques of investigation and research and the necessary tools to analyse facts and evidence, terrorism and drug-related offences, penal procedures in comparative perspective, and mechanisms for the protection of human rights within the United Nations system.

16. The collaboration between the Centre for Human Rights and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights continued to develop in 1989, in particular regarding the teaching of human rights in Latin American countries, a subject which was dealt with during the seminar on human rights for Andean countries organized by the Centre. The Andean Workshop on Human Rights, organized by the Centre under the auspices of the Government of Ecuador, took place at Quito from 8 to 12 May 1989. Participants in the Workshop included personnel from the ministries of external relations, education and justice, and from the judiciary of six countries. Forty-one nationals of Ecuador also took part in the Workshop. Issues dealt with included international instruments of the United Nations and Inter-American systems, monitoring mechanisms and procedures, the incorporation of international norms into domestic legislation, states of emergency and obligations of States, the independence of the judiciary, the role of the police in protecting human rights and the teaching of human rights. In addition, the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights received the support of the Centre for Human Rights for the seminar held at Brasilia to discuss the possibility of structuring a training programme in human rights for officials of Latin American ministries of external relations, which would assist them in overcoming difficulties in relation to the international implementation of human rights conventions.

17. A Latin American regional training course on the implementation of human rights instruments and the administration of justice was organized by the Centre for Human Rights in co-operation with the Government of Argentina and was held at Buenos Aires from 9 to 13 October 1989. Participants from 11 countries took part in the training course. Issues dealt with included study of cases of violations of human rights taken up by regional bodies, human rights in the European systems, and how best to fulfil treaty obligations at the national and international levels.

III. ACTION BY THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

18. In its resolution 43/152, the General Assembly requested the Commission on Human Rights to continue to pay special attention to the most appropriate ways of assisting, at their request, countries of the different regions under the programme of advisory services and to make, where necessary, the relevant recommendations.

19. In response to that request, the Secretary-General submitted to the Commission on Human Rights, at its forty-sixth session, held from 29 January to 9 March 1990, his report on advisory services in the field of human rights (E/CN.4/1990/43 and Corr.1). In his report, the Secretary-General, inter alia, informed the Commission

of the way in which the programme of advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights had been applied.

20. The Secretary-General also described the activities financed from the regular budget and from the Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights, which included assistance to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights of OAU and to the Governments of Colombia, the Gambia and Guatemala for training courses, workshops, seminars, fellowships and consultative missions of experts.

21. Following the information contained in that report, the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1990/58 of 7 March 1990, entitled "Advisory services in the field of human rights", reaffirmed that the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights should continue to provide practical assistance in the implementation of international conventions on human rights to those States which indicated a need for such assistance, recommended to the Secretary-General that the provision of expert assistance and activities to assist Governments in the development of the necessary infrastructures to meet international human rights standards should continue to increase, requested the Secretary-General to enable the Centre for Human Rights to intensify co-ordination within the United Nations system of the activities for the provision of advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights in all their aspects, and encouraged Governments in need of technical assistance in the field of human rights to avail themselves of the advisory services of experts in the field of human rights, for example, for drafting basic legal texts in conformity with international conventions on human rights.

22. In response to the request made by the Commission in its resolution 1989/50, the Secretary-General submitted to it at its forty-sixth session a report on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian-Pacific region (E/CN.4/1990/18 and Add.1). In that report, the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, informed the Commission of the assistance that the Centre had provided to the ESCAP library, as well as of information received from countries of the Asian-Pacific region and United Nations development agencies in the Asian-Pacific region.

23. Following the information contained in that report, the Commission, in its resolution 1990/71 of 7 March 1990, entitled "Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian-Pacific region", requested the Secretary-General to ensure a continuing flow of human rights materials to the ESCAP library for appropriate dissemination in the region encouraged United Nations development agencies in the region to co-ordinate with ESCAP their efforts to promote the human rights dimension in their activities, and requested the Secretary-General to consult the countries of the region on the widest possible basis in the implementation of the present resolution. Finally, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to submit a further report to it at its forty-seventh session, incorporating information on the progress achieved in the implementation of the present resolution.

24. It should also be recalled that in the same resolution the Commission took note that an Asian-Pacific regional workshop on human rights issues, including

regional and national institutions and arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, would be held in Manila in early 1990, within the framework of the advisory services and technical assistance programme and the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights. That workshop was held at Manila from 7 to 11 May 1990 (see paras. 8-10 above).
