

114. Elimination of racism and racial discrimination¹

Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

At its twentieth session, in 1965, the General Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it reports concerning the state of ratifications of the Convention, which would be considered by the Assembly at its future sessions (resolution 2106 A (XX)). The Convention entered into force on 4 January 1969.

At its fifty-third session,¹⁷⁹ the General Assembly urged those States that had not yet become parties to the Convention to ratify it or accede thereto, and decided to consider at its fifty-fifth session the report of the Secretary-General concerning the status of the Convention (resolution 53/131, sect. III).

As at 1 May 2000, 156 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention.

Document: Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 53/131, sect. III).

Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

In accordance with article 8 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination consists of 18 experts.

Members of the Committee are elected for a term of four years and are eligible for re-election. At present, the Committee is composed of the following members:

Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr (Egypt),* Michael Parker Banton (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland),* Marc Bossuyt (Belgium),** Brun-Otto Bryde (Germany)*, Ion Diaconu (Romania),** François L. Fall (Guinea),** Régis de Gouttes (France),* Patricia N. January-Bardill (South Africa),** Carlos Lechuga Hevia (Cuba),* Gay McDougall (United States of America),* Peter Nobel (Sweden),* Yuri A. Rechetov (Russian Federation),** Raghavan Pillai (India),** Agha Shahi (Pakistan),* Michael E. Sherifis (Cyprus),* Luis Valencia

¹⁷⁹ References for the fifty-third session (agenda item 108):

- (a) Report of the Economic and Social Council: Supplement No. 3 (A/53/3 and Corr.1 and Add.1);
- (b) Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Supplement No. 18 (A/53/18);
- (c) Reports of the Secretary-General:
 - (i) Financial situation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: A/53/255;
 - (ii) Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: A/53/256;
 - (iii) Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination: A/53/305;
- (d) Report of the Third Committee: A/53/623;
- (e) Resolutions 53/131 to 53/133;
- (f) Meetings of the Third Committee: A/C.3/53/SR.23-26, 36, 46 and 47;
- (g) Plenary meeting: A/53/PV.85.

Rodriguez (Ecuador),** Mario Jorge Yutzis (Argentina)** and Deci Zou (China).**

* Term of office expires on 19 January 2002.

** Term of office expires on 19 January 2004.

Under article 9 of the Convention, the Committee reports annually, through the Secretary-General, to the General Assembly on its activities and may make suggestions and recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from States parties to the Convention.

At its fifty-third session,¹⁷⁹ the General Assembly decided to consider the report of the Committee further at its fifty-fifth session (resolution 53/131).

Document: Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on its fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions: Supplement No. 18 (A/55/18).

Financial situation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

At its fifty-third session,¹⁷⁹ the General Assembly strongly urged States parties to the Convention to accelerate their domestic ratification procedures with regard to the amendment to the Convention concerning the financing of the Committee and to notify the Secretary-General expeditiously in writing of their agreement to the amendment; strongly appealed to all States parties that were in arrears to fulfil their outstanding financial obligations under article 8, paragraph 6, of the Convention; requested the Secretary-General to invite those States parties which were in arrears to pay the amounts in arrears and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session; and decided to consider at its fifty-fifth session, under the item entitled "Elimination of racism and racial discrimination", the reports of the Secretary-General and of the Committee on the financial situation of the Committee (resolution 53/131, sects. II and III).

Document: Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 53/131, sect. II).

World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly decided to convene a World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance not later than 2001 and defined objectives and guidelines for the preparatory process of the World Conference (resolution 52/111).

At its fifty-third session,¹⁷⁹ the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at both its fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions a comprehensive report on the progress achieved in the preparatory process (resolution 53/132, sect. II).

At its fifty-fourth session,¹⁸⁰ the Assembly recommended that the Preparatory Committee give consideration to the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; requested the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that adequate financial resources were made available for the preparatory process for the World Conference; requested the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights to make every effort to ensure the mobilization of resources for the voluntary fund for the Conference; called upon the High Commissioner to help States and regional organizations to convene national and regional meetings or to undertake other initiatives, including activities at the expert level, to prepare for the Conference; requested the Secretary-General, the specialized agencies and the regional commissions to provide financial and technical assistance for the organization of the regional preparatory meetings; decided that the Conference and the sessions of the Preparatory Committee should be open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, representatives of organizations that had received a standing invitation from the Assembly to participate as observers, specialized agencies, secretariats of the regional commissions and all United Nations bodies and programmes, representatives of all United Nations mechanisms in the field of human rights, other interested governmental organizations and interested non-governmental organizations (resolution 54/154).

At its fifty-sixth session, the Commission on Human Rights welcomed the offer by South Africa to host the World Conference against Racism in 2001; decided to appoint an 11-member Bureau for the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference, comprising two representatives per regional group and a representative of the host country as an ex officio member; invited Governments to promote the participation of national institutions and local non-governmental organizations in the preparations and in regional meetings; and encouraged all parliaments to participate actively in the preparation of the World Conference through the relevant international organizations (Commission resolution 2000/14, sect. V).

The Preparatory Committee for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held its first session in Geneva, from 1 to 5 May 2000. The Preparatory Committee decided to accept the invitation of the Government of South Africa to host the World Conference; to hold the Conference from 31 August to 7 September 2001; adopted the following slogan for the Conference: "United to Combat Racism: Equality, Justice, Dignity"; adopted provisional rules of procedure for the Conference; adopted themes to be included in the provisional agenda for the Conference; decided to recommend that the General Assembly authorize the establishment of an inter-sessional open-ended working group to meet in Geneva for five days in January 2001 and that the Assembly authorize it to extend its second session in Geneva for up to

¹⁸⁰ References for the fifty-fourth session (agenda item 114):

- (a) Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Supplement No. 18 (A/54/18);
- (b) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the preparatory process for the World Conference: A/54/299;
- (c) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: A/54/347;
- (d) Report of the Third Committee: A/54/603;
- (e) Resolutions 54/153 and 54/154 and decision 54/433;
- (f) Meetings of the Third Committee: A/C.3/54/SR.19-22, 37, 39, 41, 48 and 56;
- (g) Plenary meeting: A/54/PV.83.

five additional working days; decided to recommend that the Assembly reiterate its appeal for contributions from extrabudgetary resources to meet the cost of participation of least developed countries in the preparatory process and at the Conference itself; invited the High Commissioner for Human Rights to draw up a draft declaration and programme of action for the Conference and to transmit it to the meeting of the inter-sessional open-ended working group for its consideration; and adopted three decisions concerning participation in the preparatory process and the World Conference itself.

Documents:

- (a) Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 53/132);
- (b) Report of the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

Measures to combat contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

The General Assembly considered this question at its forty-ninth to fifty-third sessions (resolutions 49/147, 50/135, 51/79, 52/109 and 53/133).

At its fifty-fourth session,¹⁸⁰ the General Assembly expressed its full support and appreciation for the work of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, encouraged its continuation and took note with appreciation of his report; expressed its profound concern about and unequivocal condemnation of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in particular all racist violence, including related acts of random and indiscriminate violence; also expressed its profound concern about and unequivocal condemnation of all forms of racism and racial discrimination, including propaganda, activities and organizations based on doctrines of superiority of one race or group of persons that attempt to justify or promote racism and racial discrimination in any form; expressed its profound concern about and condemnation of manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance against as well as stereotyping of migrant workers and members of their families, persons belonging to minorities and members of vulnerable groups in many societies; expressed deep concern about the increase in racial and xenophobic violence in many parts of the world, as well as the increasing number of associations established on the basis of racist and xenophobic platforms and charters, as reflected in the report of the Special Rapporteur; encouraged all States to include in their educational curricula and social programmes at all levels, as appropriate, knowledge of and tolerance and respect for foreign cultures, peoples and countries; encouraged Governments to take appropriate measures to eradicate all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; condemned the misuse of print, audio-visual and electronic media and new communication technologies, including the Internet, to incite violence motivated by racial hatred; and requested the Secretary-General to provide the Special Rapporteur with all the necessary human and financial assistance to carry out his mandate efficiently, effectively and expeditiously and to enable him to submit an interim report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session (resolution 54/153).

Document: Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on measures to combat contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (resolution 54/153).

115. Right of peoples to self-determination

At its fifty-fourth session,¹⁸¹ the General Assembly reaffirmed that the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries were causes for grave concern to all States; urged all States to take the necessary steps and to exercise the utmost vigilance against the menace posed by the activities of mercenaries; called upon all States that had not yet done so to consider taking the necessary action to sign or to ratify the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries; urged all States to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination in the fulfilment of his mandate; and requested the Special Rapporteur to report his findings on the use of mercenaries to undermine the right of peoples to self-determination to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session (resolution 54/151).

At the same session, the General Assembly reaffirmed that the universal realization of the rights of all peoples, including those under colonial, foreign and alien domination, to self-determination was a fundamental condition for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights and for the preservation and promotion of such rights; requested the Commission on Human Rights to continue to give special attention to the violation of human rights, especially the right to self-determination, resulting from foreign military intervention, aggression or occupation; and requested the Secretary-General to report on this question to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session (resolution 54/155).

Documents:

- (a) Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 54/155), A/55/176;
- (b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Special Rapporteur on the use of mercenaries (resolution 54/151).

116. Human rights questions¹

(a) Implementation of human rights instruments

United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

The General Assembly, by its resolution 46/122, established the Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery as a general trust fund for humanitarian purposes to assist representatives of non-governmental organizations from different regions dealing with issues of contemporary forms of slavery to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery by providing them with financial assistance and to extend, through established channels of assistance, humanitarian, legal and financial

¹⁸¹ References for the fifty-fourth session (agenda item 115):

- (a) Report of the Secretary-General on the right of peoples to self-determination: A/54/327;
- (b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination: A/54/326;
- (c) Report of the Third Committee: A/54/604 and Corr.1;
- (d) Report of the Fifth Committee on programme budget implications: A/54/672;
- (e) Resolutions 54/151, 54/152 and 54/155;
- (f) Meetings of the Third Committee: A/C.3/54/SR.19-22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 33 and 48;
- (g) Plenary meeting: A/54/PV.83.

aid to individuals whose human rights had been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. The Fund is administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations by the Secretary-General, with the advice of a Board of Trustees. The Fund can receive voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities.

Document: Note by the Secretary-General (resolution 46/122).

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

At its third session, in 1948, the General Assembly adopted and opened for signature and ratification the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (resolution 260 A (III)). The Convention entered into force on 12 January 1951. In accordance with the programme of work of the Third Committee, the Assembly considers the status of the Convention on a biennial basis, in even-numbered years.

Document: Report of the Secretary-General (decision 52/428).

Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights

At its thirty-eighth session, in 1983, the General Assembly considered problems relating to the reporting obligations of States parties to United Nations conventions on human rights and requested the Secretary-General to consider the possibility of convening a meeting of the chairmen of the bodies entrusted with the consideration of reports submitted under the relevant human rights instruments (resolution 38/117).

The General Assembly considered the question annually from its thirty-ninth to fifty-first sessions (resolutions 39/138, 40/117, 41/121, 42/105, 43/135, 44/135, 45/85, 46/111, 47/111, 48/120, 49/178, 50/170 and 51/87) and biennially thereafter.

At its fifty-third session,¹⁸² the General Assembly welcomed the submission of the reports of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies on their ninth and tenth meetings, held at Geneva from 25 to 27 February and 14 to 18 September 1998 respectively, and took note of their conclusions and recommendations; emphasized the need to ensure financing and adequate staff and information resources for the operations of the human rights treaty bodies; welcomed the submission to the Commission on Human Rights of the final report of the independent expert on enhancing the long-term effectiveness of the United Nations human rights treaty monitoring system and of the report of the Secretary-General containing the comments and observations of Governments, United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and interested persons on the report of the independent expert, as well as his views on the legal, administrative and other implications

¹⁸² References for the fifty-third session (agenda item 110 (a)):

- (a) Report of the Human Rights Committee: Supplement No. 40 (A/53/40);
- (b) Report of the Committee against Torture: Supplement No. 44 (A/53/44);
- (c) Report of the Secretary-General on the effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights: A/53/469;
- (d) Reports of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies on their ninth and tenth meetings: A/53/125, annex, and A/53/432, annex;
- (e) Report of the Third Committee: A/53/625/Add.1;
- (f) Resolutions 53/137 to 53/139;
- (g) Meetings of the Third Committee: A/C.3/53/SR.28, 29, 36, 46 and 49;
- (h) Plenary meeting: A/53/PV.85.

of the recommendations made in the report, taking into account further developments; invited the Secretary-General to continue to solicit the views of Governments, United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and interested persons on the final report of the independent expert and to submit a further report thereon, taking into account further developments; took note with appreciation of the efforts of the chairpersons, at their ninth and tenth meetings, to propose reforms of the reporting system with a view to reducing the reporting burden on States parties while maintaining the quality of reporting, and encouraged them to continue those efforts, including through the continued examination of the benefits of reports focused on a limited range of issues and of opportunities for harmonizing the general guidelines regarding the form and content of reports, the timing of consideration of reports and the methods of work of the treaty bodies; called upon the Secretary-General to complete as soon as possible the detailed analytical study comparing the provisions of the United Nations human rights instruments that was being prepared with a view to identifying duplication of reporting required under those instruments; requested the Secretary-General to compile in a single volume all the general guidelines regarding the form and content of reports to be submitted by States parties that had been issued by the human rights treaty-monitoring bodies; invited the Chairperson of the periodic meetings of chairpersons to submit the reports of the meetings to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session; and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on measures taken to implement the present resolution, on obstacles to its implementation and on measures taken or planned to ensure financing and adequate staff and information resources for the effective operation of the human rights treaty bodies (resolution 53/138).

At its fifty-sixth session, the Commission on Human Rights considered the effective functioning of human rights mechanisms, including the treaty bodies (Commission resolution 2000/75). In accordance with Commission resolution 1998/27, the Secretary-General submitted to the Commission a report containing comments and observations on the report of the independent expert on enhancing the long-term effectiveness of the United Nations human rights treaty monitoring system received from Governments, United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and interested persons (E/CN.4/2000/98 and Add.1).

Documents:

- (a) Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 53/138);
- (b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the eleventh meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies (A/54/805, annex);
- (c) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the twelfth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies (resolution 53/138);
- (d) Report of the Secretary-General on the compilation of guidelines regarding the form and content of reports to be submitted by States parties to the international human rights treaties (resolution 53/138).

Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

At its thirty-ninth session, in 1984, the General Assembly adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (resolution 39/46, annex), and called upon all Governments to consider signing and ratifying the Convention as a matter of priority (resolution 39/46). The Convention entered into force on 26 June 1987, on the thirtieth

day after the date of the deposit with the Secretary-General of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

At its fifty-fourth session,¹⁸³ the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a report on the status of the Convention (resolution 54/156).

As at 15 May 2000, 119 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention.

Document: Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 54/156).

Report of the Committee against Torture

In accordance with article 17 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Committee against Torture is composed of 10 experts. The members of the Committee are elected for a term of four years and are eligible for re-election. At present, the Committee is composed of the following members:

Peter Thomas Burns (Canada),** Guibril Camara (Senegal),** Sayed Kassem El Masry (Egypt),* Felice Gaer (United States of America),** Alejandro González Poblete (Chile),** Andreas Mavrommatis (Cyprus),** Antonio Silva Henriques Gaspar (Portugal),* Ole Vedel Rasmussen (Denmark),* Alexander M. Yakovlev (Russian Federation)* and Yu Mengjia (China).*

* Term of office expires on 31 December 2001.

** Term of office expires on 31 December 2003.

The Committee held its twenty-third and twenty-fourth sessions in Geneva from 8 to 19 November 1999 and from 1 to 19 May 2000 respectively. In accordance with article 24 of the Convention, the Committee submits an annual report on its activities to the States parties and to the General Assembly.

At its fifty-fourth session,¹⁸³ the General Assembly urged all States that had not yet done so to become parties to the Convention as a matter of priority; invited all States parties ratifying or acceding to the Convention and those States which were parties to the Convention and which had not yet done so to make the declarations provided for in articles 21 and 22 of the Convention and to consider the possibility of withdrawing their reservations to article 20; and urged all States parties to notify the Secretary-General of their acceptance of the amendments to articles 17 and 18 of the Convention as soon as possible (resolution 54/156).

¹⁸³ References for the fifty-fourth session (agenda item 116 (a)):

- (a) Report of the Human Rights Committee: Supplement No. 40 (A/54/40);
- (b) Report of the Committee against Torture: Supplement No. 44 (A/54/44);
- (c) Reports of the Secretary-General on:
 - (i) The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture: A/54/177;
 - (ii) The status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment: A/54/189 and Corr.1;
 - (iii) The status of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families: A/54/346;
- (d) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the interim report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: A/54/426, annex;
- (e) Report of the Third Committee: A/54/605/Add.1 and Corr.1;
- (f) Resolutions 54/156 to 54/158;
- (g) Meetings of the Third Committee: A/C.3/54/SR.29-31, 35, 39, 41, 43 and 50;
- (h) Plenary meeting: A/54/PV.83.

Document: Report of the Committee against Torture: Supplement No. 44 (A/55/44).

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

By its resolution 36/151, the General Assembly established the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture as a general trust fund for humanitarian and relief purposes to receive voluntary contributions and provide direct assistance, through established channels, as humanitarian, legal and financial aid to victims of torture and their relatives. The Fund is administered, in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, by the Secretary-General, with the advice of a Board of Trustees. The Assembly authorized the Board of Trustees to promote and solicit contributions and pledges and requested the Secretary-General to give to the Board all the assistance it might require. The Assembly appealed to all Governments to respond favourably to requests for contributions to the Fund. In accordance with the arrangements adopted by the Assembly, the Secretary-General reports to it annually on the administration of the Fund.

At its fifty-fourth session,¹⁸³ the General Assembly expressed its appreciation to the Governments that contributed to the Fund; appealed to all Governments to contribute annually to the Fund, if possible with a substantial increase in the level of contributions, so that consideration might be given to the ever-increasing demand for assistance; requested the Secretary-General to transmit to all Governments the appeals of the Assembly for contributions; and further requested the Secretary-General to use all existing possibilities, including the preparation, production and dissemination of information materials, to make better known the existence of the Fund (resolution 54/156).

Document: Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 54/156), A/55/178.

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

At its fifty-fourth session,¹⁸³ the General Assembly, recalling article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and its resolution 39/46 of 10 December 1984, by which it adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, called upon all Governments to cooperate with and to assist the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the performance of his task, in particular by supplying all necessary information requested by him, to react appropriately and expeditiously to his urgent appeals and to give serious consideration to his requests to visit their countries and to the follow-up of his recommendations; and decided to consider the interim report of the Special Rapporteur at its fifty-fifth session (resolution 54/156).

Document: Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the interim report of the Special Rapporteur (resolution 54/156).

Report of the Human Rights Committee

At its twenty-first session, in 1966, the General Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol thereto (resolution 2200 A (XXI)). The Covenant and the Optional Protocol entered into force on 23 March 1976.

In accordance with article 28 of the Covenant, the Human Rights Committee is composed of 18 experts. The members of the Committee are elected for a term of four years and are eligible for re-election. At present the Committee is composed of the following members:

Abdelfattah Amor (Tunisia),** Nisuke Ando (Japan),** Prafullachandra Narwarhal Bhagwati (India),** Christine Chanet (France),** Lord Colville (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland),* Elizabeth Evatt (Australia),* Pilar Gaitán de Pombo (Colombia),* Louis Henkins (United States of America),** Eckart Klein (Germany),** David Kretzmer (Israel),** Rajsoomer Lallah (Mauritius),* Cecilia Medina Quiroga (Chile),** Fausto Pocar (Italy),* Martin Scheinin (Finland),* Hipolito Solari Yrigoyen (Argentina),** Roman Wieruszewski (Poland),* Maxwell Yalden (Canada)* and Abdallah Zakhia (Lebanon).*

* Term of office expires on 31 December 2000.

** Term of office expires on 31 December 2002.

As at 1 May 2000, 144 States had ratified or acceded to the Covenant, 95 States had ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol, and 44 States had ratified or acceded to the Second Optional Protocol Aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty.

In accordance with article 45 of the Covenant, the Committee submits to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, an annual report on its activities.

At its fifty-fourth session,¹⁸³ the General Assembly took note with appreciation of the annual report of the Human Rights Committee submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (resolution 54/157).

Document: Report of the Human Rights Committee: Supplement No. 40 (A/55/40).

Status of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

At its fifty-fourth session,¹⁸³ the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General and requested him to submit an updated report on the status of the Convention at its fifty-fifth session (resolution 54/158).

Document: Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 54/158).

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

At its fifty-third session,¹⁸⁴ the General Assembly strongly condemned all the extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions that continued to take place throughout the world; demanded that all Governments ensure that the practice of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions be brought to an end and that they take effective action to combat and eliminate the phenomenon in all its forms; reaffirmed Economic and Social Council decision 1998/265 endorsing the decision of the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1998/68 to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions for three years; strongly urged Governments to respond to the communications transmitted by the Special Rapporteur and to cooperate with and assist her so that she may carry out her mandate effectively; and requested the Special Rapporteur to submit an interim report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the situation worldwide in regard to extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and her recommendations for more effective action to combat that phenomenon (resolution 53/147).

Document: Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the interim report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (resolution 53/147).

Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

At its fifty-third session,¹⁸⁴ the General Assembly, reaffirming that regional arrangements play a fundamental role in promoting and protecting human rights and should reinforce universal human rights standards, as contained in international human rights instruments, 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 technical cooperation and to make, where necessary, relevant recommendations; welcomed the recent adoption by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights; and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-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 the resolution (resolution 53/148).

Document: Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 53/148).

Question of enforced or involuntary disappearances

At its fifty-third session,¹⁸⁴ the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to all Governments to take appropriate legislative or other steps to prevent and suppress the practice of enforced disappearances, in keeping with the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and to take action at the national and regional levels and in cooperation with the United Nations to that end; requested the Secretary-

¹⁸⁴ References for the fifty-third session (agenda item 110 (b)):

- (a) Reports of the Secretary-General on:
 - (i) The question of enforced or involuntary disappearances: A/53/304;
 - (ii) The strengthening of the rule of law: A/53/309;
 - (iii) Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights: A/53/324;
- (b) Note by the Secretary-General on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions: A/53/337;
- (c) Report of the Third Committee: A/53/625/Add.2;
- (d) Resolutions 53/142, 53/146, 53/147, 53/148 and 53/150;
- (e) Meetings of the Third Committee: A/C.3/53/SR.33-41, 46-51 and 53;
- (f) Plenary meeting: A/53/PV.85.

General to keep it informed of the steps he takes to secure the widespread dissemination and promotion of the Declaration and to submit to it at its fifty-fifth session a report on the steps taken to implement the resolution; and decided to consider the question of enforced disappearances, and in particular the implementation of the Declaration, at its fifty-fifth session (resolution 53/150).

Document: Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 53/150).

Strengthening of the rule of law

At its fifty-third session,¹⁸⁴ the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its fifty-fifth session on the results of contacts established in accordance with the resolution as well as on any other developments pertaining to the implementation of the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights that a comprehensive programme be established within the United Nations with a view to helping States in the task of building and strengthening national structures that have a direct impact on the overall observance of human rights and the maintenance of the rule of law (resolution 53/142).

Document: Report of the Secretary-General (resolution 53/142).

Human rights and extreme poverty

At its fifty-third session,¹⁸⁴ the General Assembly invited the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, within the framework of the implementation of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, to continue to give appropriate attention to the question of human rights and extreme poverty; invited States, United Nations bodies, in particular the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Development Programme, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to give appropriate attention to the links between human rights and extreme poverty; and decided to consider the question further at its fifty-fifth session (resolution 53/146).

No advance documentation is expected.