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Agenda item 33

DRAFT INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Carlos Manuel COX (Peru)

ADDENDUM

FUTURE WORK ON THE DRAFT COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

121. At the 834th meeting, Bolivia, Ceylon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Pakistan, Panama and Sudan submitted a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.663) concerning future work on the draft Covenants. Under the terms of this draft resolution, the General Assembly, inter alia, (a) reaffirming its resolution 833 (IX) which stressed the importance of the adoption of the Covenants as soon as possible, (b) recalling its resolution 1041 (XI) by which it decided that the Third Committee should devote enough time to the discussion of the draft Covenants to be able if possible to complete them for adoption by the General Assembly at its thirteenth session, and (c) noting that at the twelfth session thirty-eight meetings had been devoted to the draft Covenants by the Third Committee and only four articles had been adopted at that session while sixty-two still remained for consideration, would recommend "that, at the thirteenth session, appropriate steps should be taken to enable its Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee to complete the draft International Covenants on Human Rights within the time specified in resolution 1041 (XI) of the General Assembly or within a time as reasonably close to that time as possible".

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122. In support of the draft resolution it was pointed out that the United Nations would be deceiving the hopes of the peoples of the world if it did not make a special effort to speed up the adoption of the draft Covenants. At the present rate of progress it would take some ten to fifteen years to complete the Covenants. It was therefore essential that appropriate steps should be taken by the Assembly at its next session to enable the Third Committee to complete the Covenants at that session or within a time as reasonably close thereto as possible. For example, the Committee might be asked to continue meeting beyond the normal duration of the Assembly session, or to devote more meetings to the discussion of the Covenants than it had hitherto done. It was also suggested that the Committee might be able to expedite its work on the Covenants if it fixed in advance the number of meetings to be devoted to the consideration of each article. Some representatives stressed, however, that in speeding up the work on the Covenants there should be no curtailment of other items on the Committee's agenda. Some representatives also expressed the view that any plan adopted should not entail additional expenditure of funds.

123. A number of representatives felt that the Committee ought to have been given sufficient time to study the proposal and appealed to the sponsors not to press the draft resolution to a vote. The sponsors therefore agreed to withdraw the draft resolution on the understanding that the main points of the proposal, as well as of the debate thereon, would be reflected in the Committee's report. It was explained that the primary purpose of the proposal was to alert Member States to the importance of finding, at the Assembly's next session, ways and means of speeding up the work on the draft Covenants.

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