

46/124. National institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling the relevant resolutions concerning national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights, notably its resolution 41/129 of 4 December 1986 and Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1987/40 of 10 March 1987,³⁴ 1988/72 of 10 March 1988,³⁵ 1989/52 of 7 March 1989³⁶ and 1990/73 of 7 March 1990,³⁷ and taking note of Commission resolution 1991/27 of 5 March 1991,³⁸

Emphasizing the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁶ the International Covenants on Human Rights²⁶ and other international instruments for promoting respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Affirming that priority should be accorded to the development of appropriate arrangements at the national level to ensure the effective implementation of international human rights standards,

Convinced of the significant role that institutions at the national level can play in protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in developing and enhancing public awareness of those rights and freedoms,

Recognizing that the United Nations can play a catalytic role in assisting the development of national institutions by acting as a clearing-house for the exchange of information and experience,

Mindful in this regard of the guidelines on the structure and functioning of national and local institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/46 of 14 December 1978,

Recalling the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 45/155 of 18 December 1990 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1991/30 of 5 March 1991³⁸ inviting the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights to examine ways and means by which the World Conference could encourage the establishment or strengthening of national institutions,

Noting the diverse approaches adopted throughout the world for the protection and promotion of human rights at the national level, and recognizing the value of such approaches to promoting universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms,

1. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the updated report of the Secretary-General on national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights,¹⁵⁷ prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/64 of 8 December 1989;

2. *Reaffirms* the importance of the development, in accordance with national legislation, of effective national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights and of maintaining their independence and integrity;

3. *Encourages* Member States to establish or, where they already exist, to strengthen national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights and to incorporate those elements in national development plans;

4. *Notes* the progress made in this area in the past few years and the increased number and effectiveness of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in all parts of the world;

5. *Notes also* the efforts of the Centre for Human

Rights of the Secretariat to increase cooperation with regional and national institutions;

6. *Encourages* initiatives on the part of Governments and regional, international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations intended to strengthen existing national institutions and to establish such institutions where they do not exist;

7. *Requests* the Centre for Human Rights to continue its efforts in order to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and regional and national institutions, particularly in respect of advisory services and technical assistance, public information and education in the field of human rights;

8. *Also requests* the Centre for Human Rights to establish, upon the request of States concerned, United Nations centres for human rights documentation and training, and to do so on the basis of established procedures for the use of available resources within the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to respond favourably to requests from Member States for assistance in the establishment and strengthening of national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights as part of the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights, as well as national centres for human rights documentation and training;

10. *Encourages* all Member States to take appropriate steps to promote the exchange of information and experience concerning the establishment and operation of such national institutions;

11. *Affirms* the role of national institutions as agencies for the dissemination of human rights materials and other public information activities, prepared or organized under the auspices of the United Nations;

12. *Recognizes* the constructive role that non-governmental organizations can play in relation to national institutions;

13. *Welcomes* the convening of a workshop on this subject by the Centre for Human Rights in Paris in October 1991, as was requested in Commission on Human Rights resolution 1990/73;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to forward the results of that meeting to the Commission on Human Rights;

15. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*75th plenary meeting
17 December 1991*

46/125. Question of enforced or involuntary disappearances

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 33/173 of 20 December 1978 concerning disappeared persons, and its resolution 45/165 of 18 December 1990 on the question of enforced or involuntary disappearances,

Deeply concerned about the persistence of the practice of enforced disappearances in the world, and about the fact that, in certain cases, the families of disappeared persons have been the target of intimidation and ill-treatment,

Expressing its profound emotion at the anguish and sorrow of the families concerned, who are unsure of the fate of their relatives,

Concerned by the growing number of reports concerning harassment of witnesses of disappearances or relatives of disappeared persons,

Recalling that the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has referred on several occasions in its reports to the importance of drafting a declaration to enable it to fulfil its task properly,

Convinced of the need to continue implementing the provisions of its resolution 33/173 and of the other United Nations resolutions on the question of enforced or involuntary disappearances, with a view to finding solutions for cases of disappearances and helping to eliminate such practices,

Bearing in mind Commission on Human Rights resolution 1991/41 of 5 March 1991,³⁸

1. *Notes with satisfaction* that the open-ended working group established by Commission on Human Rights resolution 1991/41 has completed its consideration of the draft declaration on the protection of all persons from enforced or involuntary disappearances,¹⁵⁸ which will be transmitted to the Commission on Human Rights for adoption at its forty-eighth session;

2. *Requests* the Commission on Human Rights to give this question high priority at its forty-eighth session;

3. *Appeals* to Governments to take appropriate steps to prevent and suppress the practice of enforced disappearances and to take action at the national and regional levels and in cooperation with the United Nations to that end;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances for its humanitarian work and thanks those Governments that have cooperated with it;

5. *Recalls with satisfaction* the decision made by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-sixth session to extend for two years the term of the mandate of the Working Group, as defined in Commission resolution 20 (XXXVI) of 29 February 1980,²⁷ while maintaining the principle of annual reporting, and requests the Working Group to continue to fulfil its mandate in a rigorous and constructive fashion;

6. *Appeals* to the Governments concerned, particularly those which have not yet replied to the communications addressed to them by the Working Group, to cooperate fully with it so as to enable it, with respect for its working methods based on discretion, to perform its strictly humanitarian role, and in particular to reply more quickly to the requests for information addressed to them;

7. *Encourages* the Governments concerned to consider the wish of the Working Group, when such a wish is expressed, to visit their countries, thus enabling it to fulfil its mandate even more effectively;

8. *Expresses its appreciation* to those Governments that have cooperated with the Working Group and replied to its requests for information;

9. *Extends its warm thanks* to those Governments which have invited the Working Group, requests them to give all necessary attention to its recommendations and invites them to inform the Working Group of any follow-up measures taken;

10. *Appeals* to the Governments concerned to take

steps to protect the families of disappeared persons against any intimidation or ill-treatment of which they may be the target;

11. *Calls upon* the Commission on Human Rights to continue to study this question as a matter of priority and to take any step it may deem necessary to the pursuit of the task of the Working Group when it considers the report to be submitted by the Working Group to the Commission at its forty-eighth session;

12. *Renews its request* to the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Working Group with all necessary facilities.

75th plenary meeting
17 December 1991

46/126. Human rights and scientific and technological progress

The General Assembly,

Noting that scientific and technological progress is one of the decisive factors in the development of human society,

Bearing in mind the relevant provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁸ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,²⁶ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights²⁶ and the Declaration on Social Progress and Development,⁴⁴

Recalling the relevant provisions of the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind,¹⁵⁹

Reaffirming the need to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and the dignity of the human person in the conditions of scientific and technological progress,

Bearing in mind that the main and decisive factor in the acceleration of the social and economic development of society is the development of the human being,

Conscious that modern science and technology give the possibility to create material conditions for the prosperity of society and for the thorough development of the human person,

Being convinced that today the resources of mankind and the activities of scientists should be used for the peaceful social, economic and cultural development of all countries, raising the standard of living of all peoples and for better assurance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing the need to broaden the access of developing countries to the achievements of scientific and technological progress,

Recognizing also the important contribution of science and technology to the economic and social progress of mankind,

Aware that the exchange of scientific and technological knowledge is one of the important ways to accelerate the social and economic development of all countries, especially of developing countries,

1. *Underlines* the importance of the implementation by all States of the provisions and principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights²⁶ and the relevant provisions of the Declaration on the Use of Scientific and