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STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its thirty-third session, the Commission on Human Rights had before it a note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1227) on the status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
2. In its resolution 2 (XXXIII) of 18 February 1977 the Commission on Human Rights welcomed with deep satisfaction the entry into force of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the latter Covenant. The Commission called upon all States to take legislative or other measures for the realization of the human rights and fundamental freedoms provided for in the Covenants, invited the States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to consider making the declaration provided for in article 41 of that Covenant and requested the Secretary-General to continue to inform the Commission on Human Rights at each session of any new developments with regard to ratification and implementation of the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Optional Protocol. The present note was prepared in response to that request.
3. Before the adoption by the Commission of resolution 2 (XXXIII), Guyana had ratified both Covenants, on 15 February 1977. Since then, the two Covenants were ratified by Panama on 8 March 1977, Poland on 18 March 1977 and Spain on 27 April 1977. Both Covenants were signed by the United States of America on 5 October 1977. As a result, on 31 December 1977, 46 States had become parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and 44 States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the list of States that had signed, ratified or acceded to the Covenants, as well as the dates of their signature, ratification or accession, may be found in annexes I and II.
4. In addition, Panama, on 8 March 1977, ratified the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As of 31 December 1977 16 States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights had become parties to the Protocol; the list of States that had signed, ratified or acceded to the Protocol, as well as the dates of their signature, ratification or accession, may be found in annex III.

5. In paragraph 8 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1988 (LX) of 11 May 1976, the Council requested the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the specialized agencies concerned, to draw general guidelines for the reports to be submitted by the States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and specialized agencies. General guidelines were drawn accordingly and transmitted to all States parties. In his notes verbales transmitting these guidelines, the Secretary-General requested the States parties, in compliance with the above-mentioned Council resolution, to submit their reports on the first stage, concerning rights covered by articles 6 to 9 of the Covenant, by 1 September 1977. As at 31 December 1977, reports had been received from the following countries: Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Iran, Mongolia, Norway, Philippines, Sweden, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

6. Reports submitted under the first stage of the programme established by Economic and Social Council resolution 1988 (LX) of 11 May 1976 will be scheduled for consideration by the Council at its sixty-fourth session. Copies of the reports already received have been transmitted to the International Labour Office in accordance with article 16, paragraph 2 (b), of the Covenant and paragraph 5 of the above-mentioned Council resolution.

7. The Human Rights Committee established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which came into force on 23 March 1976, held its first session at United Nations Headquarters from 21 March to 1 April 1977 and its second session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 11 to 31 August 1977. During these two sessions, the Committee adopted most of its provisional rules of procedure. The Committee also considered six of the eleven reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant. In this connexion, the Committee adopted general guidelines regarding the form and contents of reports from States parties under that article. These guidelines are aimed at ensuring that reports are presented in a uniform manner in order to enable the Committee and the States parties to obtain a complete picture of the situation in each State as regards the implementation of the rights referred to in the Covenant. The Committee also dealt, in private meetings, with the communications before it under the Protocol and adopted decisions relevant to the procedure for determining the admissibility of these communications.

8. As at 31 December 1977, reports required under article 40 of the Covenant had been submitted by the following States parties: Chile, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Hungary, Iran, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Norway, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

9. The first annual report of the Human Rights Committee^{1/} covering the work of its first and second sessions was submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations at its thirty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with article 45 of the Covenant.

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 44 and corrigendum (A/32/44 and Corr.1).

10. The Economic and Social Council considered the report of the Committee at its 2087th meeting on 17 October 1977, during its resumed sixty-third session. The Council heard a statement by the Director of the Division of Human Rights. After some discussion ^{2/} the Council decided, at the suggestion of its President, to take note of the report of the Committee and transmit it to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session, together with a report on the financial implications of the Committee's work.

11. The Third Committee of the General Assembly considered the report of the Human Rights Committee under agenda item 81(a) at seven meetings held during the period from 17 October to 2 November 1977.

12. The Third Committee began its consideration of the report of the Human Rights Committee with an introductory statement by the Director of the Division of Human Rights. A statement was submitted by the Secretary-General on the financial implications of the work of the Human Rights Committee (A/C.3/32/L.11).

13. During the discussions that followed ^{3/} all speakers expressed their satisfaction with the report and praised the achievement of the Committee during its first two sessions. Many representatives noted with satisfaction the thoroughness and care with which it had approached its task and which, they maintained, would prove to have a great impact on the future role of the United Nations in the field of human rights. In this connexion, a number of ideas were expressed with particular reference to the relationship between the Committee and the United Nations bodies concerned with human rights and to the role of the Economic and Social Council in relation to the Committee's report.

14. In its resolution 32/66, adopted on the recommendation of the Third Committee, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the report of the Committee and expressed its satisfaction at the serious manner in which the Committee was undertaking its functions. The Assembly also appreciated that the Committee strove for uniform standards in the implementation of the provisions of the Covenant and of the Optional Protocol thereto. The Secretary-General was requested to keep the Human Rights Committee informed of the activities of the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

15. The Human Rights Committee is scheduled to hold its third session from 16 January to 3 February 1978 at the United Nations Office at Geneva. A working group, composed of five members of the Committee, is scheduled to meet at Geneva from 9 to 13 January 1978, in order to make recommendations to the Committee regarding the fulfilment of the conditions of admissibility of communications submitted under the Protocol.

^{2/} For a summary of the statement and of the discussion, see E/SR.2087.

^{3/} For a summary of the discussion, see A/C.3/32/SR.30-33 and 37.

ANNEX I

List of States which have signed, ratified or acceded to
the International Covenant on Economic, Social and
Cultural Rights

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Algeria	10 December 1968	
Argentina	19 February 1968	
Australia	18 December 1972	10 December 1975
Austria	10 December 1973	
Barbados		5 January 1973 ^{a/}
Belgium	10 December 1968	
Bulgaria	8 October 1968	21 September 1970
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	19 March 1968	12 November 1973
Canada		19 May 1976 ^{a/}
Chile	16 September 1969	10 February 1972
China		
Colombia	21 December 1966	29 October 1969
Costa Rica	19 December 1966	29 November 1968
Cyprus	9 January 1967	2 April 1969
Czechoslovakia	7 October 1968	23 December 1975
Denmark	20 March 1968	6 January 1972
Ecuador	29 September 1967	6 March 1969
Egypt	4 August 1967	
El Salvador	21 September 1967	
Finland	11 October 1967	19 August 1975
German Democratic Republic	27 March 1973	8 November 1973
Germany, Federal Republic of	9 October 1968	17 December 1973
Guinea	28 February 1967	
Guyana	22 August 1968	15 February 1977

^{a/} Accession.

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Honduras	19 December 1966	
Hungary	25 March 1969	17 January 1974
Iceland	30 December 1968	
Iran	4 April 1968	24 June 1975
Iraq	18 February 1969	25 January 1971
Ireland	1 October 1973	
Israel	19 December 1966	
Italy	18 January 1967	
Jamaica	19 December 1966	3 October 1975
Jordan	30 June 1972	28 May 1975
Kenya		1 May 1972 ^{a/}
Lebanon		3 November 1972 ^{a/}
Liberia	18 April 1967	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		15 May 1970 ^{a/}
Luxembourg	26 November 1974	
Madagascar	14 April 1970	22 September 1971
Mali		16 July 1974 ^{a/}
Malta	22 October 1968	
Mauritius		12 December 1973 ^{a/}
Mongolia	5 June 1968	18 November 1974
Morocco	19 January 1977	
Netherlands	25 June 1969	
New Zealand	12 November 1968	
Norway	20 March 1968	13 September 1972
Panama	27 July 1976	8 March 1977
Peru	11 August 1977	
Philippines	19 December 1966	7 June 1974
Poland	2 March 1967	18 March 1977

^{a/} Accession.

ANNEX II

List of States which have signed, ratified or acceded to
the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Algeria	10 December 1968	
Argentina	19 February 1968	
Australia	18 December 1972	
Austria	10 December 1973	
Barbados		5 January 1973 ^{a/}
Belgium	10 December 1968	
Bulgaria	8 October 1968	21 September 1970
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	19 March 1968	12 November 1973
Canada		19 May 1976 ^{a/}
Chile	16 September 1969	10 February 1972
China		
Colombia	21 December 1966	29 October 1969
Costa Rica	19 December 1966	29 November 1968
Cyprus	9 January 1967	2 April 1969
Czechoslovakia	7 October 1968	23 December 1975
Denmark	20 March 1968	6 January 1972
Ecuador	29 September 1967	6 March 1969
Egypt	4 August 1967	
El Salvador	21 September 1967	
Finland	11 October 1967	19 August 1975
German Democratic Republic	27 March 1973	8 November 1973
Germany, Federal Republic of	9 October 1968	17 December 1973
Guinea	28 February 1967	

^{a/} Accession.

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Guyana	22 August 1968	15 February 1977
Honduras	19 December 1966	
Hungary	25 March 1969	17 January 1974
Iceland	30 December 1968	
Iran	4 April 1968	24 June 1975
Iraq	18 February 1969	25 January 1971
Ireland	1 October 1973	
Israel	19 December 1966	
Italy	18 January 1967	
Jamaica	19 December 1966	3 October 1975
Jordan	30 June 1972	28 May 1975
Kenya		1 May 1972 ^{a/}
Lebanon		3 November 1972 ^{a/}
Liberia	18 April 1967	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		15 May 1970 ^{a/}
Luxembourg	26 November 1974	
Madagascar	14 April 1970	22 September 1971
Mali		16 July 1974 ^{a/}
Mauritius		12 December 1973 ^{a/}
Mongolia	5 June 1968	18 November 1974
Morocco	19 January 1977	
Netherlands	25 June 1969	
New Zealand	12 November 1968	
Norway	20 March 1968	13 September 1972
Panama	27 July 1976	8 March 1977
Peru	11 August 1977	
Philippines	19 December 1966	

^{a/} Accession.

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Poland	2 March 1967	18 March 1977
Portugal	7 October 1976	
Romania	27 June 1968	9 December 1974
Rwanda		16 April 1975 ^{a/}
Senegal	6 July 1970	
Spain	28 September 1976	27 April 1977
Surinam		28 December 1976 ^{a/}
Sweden	29 September 1967	6 December 1971
Syrian Arab Republic		21 April 1969 ^{a/}
Tunisia	30 April 1968	18 March 1969
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic	20 March 1968	12 November 1973
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	18 March 1968	16 October 1973
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	16 September 1968	20 May 1976
United Republic of Tanzania		11 June 1976 ^{a/}
United States of America	5 October 1977	
Uruguay	21 February 1967	1 April 1970
Venezuela	24 June 1969	
Yugoslavia	8 August 1967	2 June 1971
Zaire		1 November 1976 ^{a/}

^{a/} Accession.

ANNEX III

List of States which have signed, ratified or acceded to the
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and
Political Rights

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Austria	10 December 1973	
Barbados		5 January 1973 <u>a/</u>
Canada		19 May 1976 <u>a/</u>
China		
Colombia	21 December 1966	29 October 1969
Costa Rica	19 December 1966	29 November 1968
Cyprus	19 December 1966	
Denmark	20 March 1968	6 January 1972
Ecuador	4 April 1968	6 March 1969
El Salvador	21 September 1967	
Finland	11 December 1967	19 August 1975
Guinea	19 March 1975	
Honduras	19 December 1966	
Italy	30 April 1976	
Jamaica	19 December 1966	3 October 1975
Madagascar	17 September 1969	21 June 1971
Mauritius		12 December 1973 <u>a/</u>
Netherlands	25 June 1969	
Norway	20 March 1968	13 September 1972
Panama	27 July 1976	8 March 1977
Peru	11 August 1977	

a/ Accession.

<u>State</u>	<u>Date of signature</u>	<u>Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession</u>
Philippines	19 December 1966	
Senegal	6 July 1970	
Surinam		28 December 1976 <u>a/</u>
Sweden	29 September 1967	6 December 1971
Uruguay	21 February 1967	1 April 1970
Venezuela	15 November 1976	
Zaire		1 November 1976 <u>a/</u>

a/ Accession.