

Third Committee since the ninth session of the General Assembly in 1954. By the end of the twelfth session, the Third Committee had approved the preamble, an article of each Covenant which deals with the question of self-determination (Article 1), and all the substantive articles of the draft Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Articles 6-16). These articles relate to the right to work, conditions of work, trade unions, social security, the protection of the family, standards of living, physical and mental health, education, culture and scientific development. By the end of the thirteenth session, substantive Articles 6-11 of the draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights had been approved by the Third Committee. These articles deal with the right to life, the prohibition of torture, slavery and forced labour, freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, the treatment to be accorded those deprived of their liberty, and the prohibition of imprisonment merely on the grounds of inability to fulfil a contractual obligation.

At the fourteenth session, the Third Committee adopted the texts of three more articles of the draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 12-14). Article 12, dealing with freedom of movement, provides that everyone lawfully within the territory of a state shall have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence within that territory and that everyone shall be free to leave any country including his own, these rights not being subject to any restrictions "except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and are consistent with the rights recognized in this Covenant". It also provides that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.

As adopted by the Third Committee, Article 13 concerning the expulsion of aliens provides that "an alien lawfully in the territory of a State Party to the Covenant may be expelled therefrom only in pursuance of a decision reached in accordance with law" and that he shall be allowed to appeal "except where compelling reasons of national security otherwise require".

Article 14 concerning fair trial provides that "all persons shall be equal before the courts and tribunals", and that "everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law". It also provides for the right of everyone charged with a criminal offence "to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law", and it entitles him to certain minimum guarantees in the determination of any criminal charge against him. Provision is made for appeals and for the awarding of compensation to persons who have suffered punishment as a result of a conviction which has subsequently been reversed. An additional paragraph sponsored by Canada, Ceylon, Iran, Italy, Japan, Jordan and Pakistan was adopted and provides that "No one shall be liable to be tried or punished again for an offence for which he has already been finally convicted or acquitted in accordance with the law and penal procedure of each country".

The Third Committee adopted a resolution which was subsequently approved by the General Assembly to give priority at the fifteenth session to the consideration of the draft International Covenants on Human Rights.

Declaration of the Rights of the Child

In 1950 the Social Commission adopted a draft Declaration of the Rights of the Child and transmitted it to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration. By a resolution adopted that year, ECOSOC requested the Commission on Human Rights to consider the draft Declaration and communicate to the Council "its observations on the principle and contents" of the draft. Although placed on the agenda of the Commission on Human