

STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN
RIGHTS

ISSUE:

Under this item, the Commission will have before it a report of the Secretary General on the status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which provides an individual complaint mechanism.

BACKGROUND:

At its 21st Session in 1966 the General Assembly adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession the ICESCR, the ICCPR and the Optional Protocol to the ICCPR. Both Covenants and the Optional Protocol entered into force in 1976. The Assembly also requested that the Secretary General submit to its future sessions, reports concerning the state of ratification of the Covenants and the Optional Protocol. As of July 25, 1986 there were 83 States Parties to ICCPR and 37 to the Optional Protocol. Eighteen countries have made the declaration under Article 41 of the ICCPR that provides an interstate complaint mechanism. States Parties to the ICCPR report to a body of independent experts, the Human Rights Committee, on the implementation of the Covenant. States Parties to the ICESCR (of which there were 87 as of June 1, 1986) are required by Article 16 of the ICESCR to report to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN on the measures which they have adopted and the progress made in achieving the observance of the rights recognized therein.

(A) ICESCR:

The monitoring committee that reviews states' reports on implementation of the ICESCR has been through several organizational changes since it was established by ECOSOC in 1987 (ECOSOC Decision 1978/18) as a sessional working group of ECOSOC on the implementation of the ICESCR. Initially it consisted of 15 representatives of States Parties selected by the President of ECOSOC. This was changed by ECOSOC Resolution 1982/33 to 15 designated "governmental experts" of 15 member states elected by ECOSOC for three years.

6
7
8
9
10
11