

Provisions also guarantee the rights of freedom of conscience, expression, assembly, association and movement. Any person who feels that rights set out in the Declaration of Rights have been violated may apply to the Supreme Court for redress. The Declaration of Rights may also be invoked in other courts and it is established practice that the rights contained in the Declaration are considered on the basis of the interpretation of equivalent rights in other jurisdictions and relevant international and regional human rights instruments.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Acceded: 13 May 1991.

Zimbabwe's second periodic report is due 30 June 1998.

Zimbabwe's initial report (E/1990/5/Add.28) was considered by the Committee at its May 1997 session. The report prepared by the government covered rights set out in articles 1 through 15 of the Covenant and included commentary on constitutional, legal and administrative provisions in the areas of: the right to, and conditions of, work; trade unionism; social security; protection and assistance to the family; an adequate standard of living; physical and mental health; education; and, cultural life and scientific progress.

The Committee's concluding observations (E/C.12/1/Add.12) acknowledged the efforts made in the areas of democratization and good governance, as well as the fact that Zimbabwe has not filed any reservations to the Covenant and has ratified a number of other international human rights instruments.

In terms of factors and difficulties that remain obstacles to implementation, note is made of the fact that under domestic law the Covenant cannot be invoked directly before the courts, even though its principles are generally reflected in domestic law. The Committee also noted that, in terms of domestic monitoring of respect of economic, social and cultural rights, the powers of the Office of the Ombudsman are limited.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee were: de facto discrimination against women, particularly in rural areas, which is attributable to traditional practices such as arranged marriages of children and forced marriages of widows with a late husband's brother; the prohibition on public servants, teachers and nurses from joining unions and the arrest and dismissal of doctors and nurses who have organized strikes; continued use of child labour; inadequacies in implementation of the right to housing; forced evictions that are carried out under conditions that are incompatible with the Covenant; and, cut backs in spending on education.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- ▶ take steps to ensure that undertakings assumed under the Covenant are appropriately reflected in domestic law and policy;
- ▶ provide appropriate access to the courts to uphold the relevant rights;
- ▶ take steps immediately to ensure *de jure* non-discrimination and protection of the cultural rights of minorities;

- ▶ give priority to the promotion of the role of women in society and the eradication of all de facto discrimination against them, in particular, through introduction of programmes to redress the imbalances in the status of women in society, particularly in rural districts;
- ▶ initiate an appropriate information campaign to acquaint the public, as well as government officials at all levels, with the provisions of the Covenant;
- ▶ extend education programmes in order to increase awareness of the provisions of the Covenant throughout society, ensure its application in the judicial process and its observance by law enforcement agencies;
- ▶ bearing in mind the government's intention to consider ratification of the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the ILO Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and the ILO Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), take steps to harmonize labour laws with these instruments as soon as possible;
- ▶ if remedial steps have not already been taken, reinstate or compensate medical workers who were dismissed because they organized a strike;
- ▶ undertake constitutional reform to allow public servants, teachers and nurses to organize in unions, enable them to bargain collectively, and allow them the right to strike;
- ▶ take appropriate measures in order more effectively to guarantee the right to housing and, in particular, to ensure that no forced evictions are carried out without alternative housing being offered; and,
- ▶ within a year, submit to the Committee a plan of action and a progress report on steps taken progressively to introduce free education.

Civil and Political Rights

Acceded: 13 May 1991.

Zimbabwe's initial report (CCPR/C/74/Add.3) has been submitted but is not yet scheduled for consideration by the Committee; the second periodic report was due 1 August 1997.

Reservations and Declarations: Declaration under article 41.

Racial Discrimination

Acceded: 13 May 1991.

Zimbabwe's second and third periodic reports were due 12 June 1994 and 1996 respectively.

Discrimination against Women

Acceded: 13 May 1991.

Zimbabwe's initial report (CEDAW/C/ZWE/1) has been submitted and was pending for consideration at the Committee's January 1998 session; the second periodic report was due 12 June 1996.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 8 March 1990; ratified: 11 September 1990.

Zimbabwe's second periodic report was due 10 October 1997.