

October 1, 1953. Another resolution, which would have instructed the Commission on Human Rights to forward to member governments with recommendations communications received by it containing allegations of breaches of human rights sufficiently serious to warrant such action, was discussed but no decision reached. The Commission was obliged to defer consideration of a possible United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, proposals regarding the welfare of the aged, the question of the right of asylum, the text of a federal state clause for inclusion in the two draft covenants, and the drafting of additional articles to be included in the Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights.

The draft measures of implementation for the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which were adopted dealt with the proposed establishment of a Human Rights Committee, composed of nine members elected by the International Court of Justice, which would be set up to adjust differences existing between member states. In addition to these quasi-judicial functions, the Committee would be empowered to recommend to the General Assembly that states responsible for the administration of dependent territories determine the political status of such territories through elections, plebiscites or other recognized democratic means in accord with the expressed desire of their inhabitants. States parties would undertake to do so, if the recommendation of the Committee were adopted by the General Assembly. The seven additional articles for inclusion in the draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights dealt with the equal enjoyment by men and women of all rights mentioned in the Covenant, equal rights for all to vote, conduct public affairs and participate in the public service; equal rights of spouses in marriage, and recognition of the family as "the natural and fundamental group unit of society"; the right of minorities to their own language, culture and religion; the humane treatment of prisoners; the forbidding of advocacy of racial or religious hostility, and of the arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, home or correspondence and all unlawful attacks upon honour or reputation.

During the discussions the United States member confirmed that, though her government would continue to collaborate in drafting the Covenants and making suggestions for improvement, it will not, for the time being at least, ratify them, on the grounds that the world is not yet ready for treaties of such wide scope and that they might not be as effective as had originally been expected.

Finally, the Commission considered the reports of the fourth and fifth sessions of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and adopted nine substantive resolutions proposed by the Sub-Commission dealing with various aspects of its work. In December 1952, ECOSOC had decided not to convene another session of the Sub-Commission pending a recommendation from the Commission on Human Rights as to its future. The Commission decided that its Sub-Commission should hold a sixth session in January 1954 and elected twelve new members for a three-year term beginning January 1, 1954. It also decided that the Sub-Commission should meet annually thereafter for a session of three weeks.

At the time of writing the report of the Commission on Human Rights had not yet been discussed by the sixteenth session of ECOSOC.