



Agenda item 79: Designation of 1968 as International Year for Human Rights*

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* For the discussion of this item, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Third Committee, 1283rd and 1284th meetings*; and *ibid., Plenary Meetings, 1279th meeting*.

DOCUMENTS A/5493 AND ADD.1

Jamaica: request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the eighteenth session

DOCUMENT A/5493

note verbale dated 10 September 1963 from the Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the Secretary-General

[Original text: English]
[11 September 1963]

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. The Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour, on the instructions of the Government of Jamaica, to propose the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly at its eighteenth session of the following additional item: "Designation of 1968 as International Year for Human Rights", in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

2. In compliance with rule 20, the Permanent Mission of Jamaica will forward an explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution.

DOCUMENT A/5493/ADD.1

Explanatory memorandum

[Original text: English]
[18 September 1963]

1. On 8 October 1962, the Hon. Hugh Shearer, Minister without Portfolio and Leader of Government Business in the Senate of Jamaica, proposed in a statement to the 1145th plenary meeting of the General Assembly that the United Nations concern in the field of human rights should be intensified through an International Year for Human Rights. The intention of the Minister's proposal was that, in a particular calendar year to be so designated by the United Nations, efforts should be intensified by Member Governments to see

that the fullest practical effect is given within their borders to the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. The year 1968 will be the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the Governments of Member States, together with non-governmental organizations, will wish to combine their efforts in celebrating its anniversary with appropriate ceremonies.

3. The Jamaica delegation therefore proposes that the year 1968 should combine the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the proposed period of intensive effort in the field of human rights and an international review of the progress made in giving effect to these rights.

4. It is suggested that, during the International Year for Human Rights, activities of the following kinds could be undertaken by Member Governments with the co-operation of their domestic non-governmental organizations and of the United Nations organs and the specialized agencies:

(a) For the purposes of the celebrations, each month or other convenient period of the year would be identified with a particular right and freedom or a particular group of rights and freedoms. Publicity and educational efforts would be concentrated on these rights or groups of rights during that period;

(b) During each period Governments would review their domestic legislation and the practices within their society in respect of the particular right or freedom against the standards set by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They would identify those rights which had been effectively secured, give publicity to them and make special efforts to promote amongst their citizens of all ages a basic understanding of the nature

and significance of these rights so that the gains already made might not easily be lost in the future. Where particular rights and freedoms had not yet been effectively secured further efforts would be made towards their achievement;

(c) Under the aegis of the United Nations or its specialized agencies special international meetings might be convened at which the progress towards achieving the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration would be reviewed;

(d) Certain international conventions in the field of human rights, although open for ratification, have not yet been adhered to by all eligible States. These include: the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons; the Convention on the Political Rights of Women; and the ILO Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value. The United Nations would endeavour to have all eligible States accede to these Conventions during 1968 if they had not already done so.

(e) The United Nations and the specialized agencies, in co-operation with Member Governments of the United Nations, would intensify their efforts to secure the completion and ratification of other international conventions in the fields of human rights which are still in the process of study and preparation. Examples of

such conventions are: the draft Covenant on Political Rights; the draft Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the draft Convention on Freedom of Information.

5. Inevitably the year 1968 would become a year towards which the United Nations and Governments would work. Their efforts would be intensified in the intervening years so that the maximum possible progress might be reported by 1968. Member Governments, for example, would endeavour to ensure that by 1968 they could report, in so far as territories were concerned, that the grosser and obvious denials of human rights such as slave trade and institutions and practices of slavery, discrimination in respect of employment, occupation, and all forced labour, had been eliminated.

6. The Jamaica delegation intends to submit for consideration during the eighteenth session of the General Assembly a draft resolution proposing that:

(a) The year 1968 be designated International Year for Human Rights;

(b) The Commission on Human Rights be requested to work out a programme of activities for the International Year of that year and to report, with recommendations, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly at its nineteenth session.

DOCUMENT A/5660

Report of the Third Committee

[Original text:
[11 December 1963]]

1. By a *note verbale* dated 10 September 1963 (A/5493), the Permanent Representative of Jamaica requested that the item entitled "Designation of 1968 as International Year for Human Rights" be included in the agenda of the eighteenth session of the General Assembly. At its 1209th plenary meeting on 20 September 1963, the General Assembly decided to include it in the agenda as item 79 and to allocate it to the Third Committee for consideration and report.

2. The Third Committee considered the item at its 1283rd and 1284th meetings held on 6 and 9 December 1963.

3. In an explanatory memorandum of 18 September 1963 (A/5493/Add.1) submitted by Jamaica, it was proposed that the year 1968 should combine the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with a period of intensive effort in the field of human rights and an international review of the progress made in giving effect to those rights.

4. At the 1283rd meeting of the Third Committee, Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ghana, India, Iraq, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Liberia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Uruguay submitted a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1181/Rev.1). At the 1283rd meeting, the sponsors of the draft resolution, together with Ecuador and Guatemala submitted a revised draft resolution

(A/C.3/L.1181/Rev.2). At the 1284th meeting, the sponsors of the revised nineteen-Power draft resolution withdrew that text and reverted to draft resolution A/C.3/L.1181/Rev.1, modified by replacing the word "interval" by the words "intervening years" in the sixth paragraph of the preamble.

5. The representative of Israel orally proposed the insertion of the words "representing a lasting contribution to the cause of human rights", between the words "activities" and "to" in operative paragraph 2.

6. The amendment of Israel was adopted by a vote of 11, with 37 abstentions.

7. Operative paragraph 2 (a), as amended, was adopted by a vote of 67 to none, with 8 abstentions.

8. The nineteen-Power draft resolution as amended (A/C.3/L.1181/Rev.1), as amended, was adopted unanimously.

Recommendation of the Third Committee

9. The Third Committee therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

[Text adopted by the General Assembly with amendments. See "Action taken by the General Assembly" below.]

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

At its 1279th plenary meeting, on 12 December 1963, the General Assembly adopted the draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee (A/5660, para. 9). For the final text, see resolution 1961 (XVIII) below.

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

1961 (XVIII). DESIGNATION OF 1968 AS INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The General Assembly,

Noting that the year 1968 will be the twentieth anniversary of the adoption and proclamation by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Taking into account the fact that, since the adoption of the Declaration, a substantial measure of progress has been achieved in giving effect to these human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing that in spite of such progress the effective realization of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Declaration remains unsatisfactory in some parts of the world,

Believing that the cause of human rights will be well served by an increasing awareness of the extent of the progress made,

Convinced that an appropriate way of celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Declaration is to devote the year 1968 to intensified national and international efforts and undertakings in the field of human rights, and also to an international review of the achievements in this field,

Confident that the designation of the year 1968 as such a year of international review will encourage all Member States and interested organizations to intensify their efforts in the intervening years, so as to show the maximum possible progress by that time,

1. *Designates* the year 1968 as International Year for Human Rights;

2. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to invite the Commission on Human Rights at its forthcoming sessions, with the assistance of the Secretary-General:

(a) To prepare, for consideration by the General Assembly, a programme of measures and activities representing a lasting contribution to the cause of human rights, to be undertaken by the United Nations, by Member States and by the specialized agencies during the year 1968, in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in furtherance of the objectives of the present resolution;

(b) To prepare, for consideration by the General Assembly, suggestions for a list of goals in the field of human rights to be achieved by the United Nations not later than the end of 1968;

(c) To submit the programme of measures and activities and the suggestions for the list of goals in time for their consideration by the General Assembly at its twentieth session;

3. *Invites* the specialized agencies to render all assistance to the Commission on Human Rights in the preparation of the programme of measures and activities to be undertaken during the International Year for Human Rights in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration;

4. *Invites* all Member States to intensify their domestic efforts in the field of human rights with the assistance of their appropriate organizations, in order that a fuller and more effective realization of these rights and freedoms might be achieved and might be reported at the proposed international review of such achievements in 1968 and thereafter.

*1279th plenary meeting,
12 December 1963.*

CHECK LIST OF DOCUMENTS

NOTE. This check list includes the documents mentioned during the consideration of agenda item 79 which are not reproduced in the present fascicle.

Document No.	Title	Observations and references
A/C.3/L.1181	Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ghana, India, Iraq, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Liberia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Uruguay: draft resolution	Replaced by A/C.3/L.1181/Rev.1
A/C.3/L.1181/Rev.1	Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ghana, India, Iraq, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Liberia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Uruguay: revised draft resolution	See A/5660, paras. 4-9
A/C.3/L.1181/Rev.2	Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Liberia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Uruguay: revised draft resolution	See A/5660, para. 4