INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights

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I. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

1. In its resolution 2081 (XX) of 20 December 1965, the General Assembly, inter alia, decided that an International Conference on Human Rights be convened in 1968, defined the purposes of the Conference and established a Preparatory Committee "to complete the preparation for the Conference in 1968 and, in particular, to make proposals for consideration of the General Assembly regarding the agenda, duration and venue of the Conference, and the means of defraying the expenses of the Conference, and to organize and direct the preparation of the necessary evaluation studies and other documentation". The Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights was requested to report on the progress of the preparations for the Conference so that its report might be considered by the General Assembly at its twenty-first and twenty-second sessions.

2. As requested by the resolution, the President of the twentieth session of the General Assembly, after consultations with all parties concerned, appointed the following seventeen States as members of the Preparatory Committee: Canada, France, India, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Somalia, Tunisia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.

3. The Preparatory Committee held its first series of meetings from 9 to 20 May and from 9 to 20 June 1966 and submitted its first progress report to the Assembly.

4. The General Assembly at its twenty-first session, having considered the Committee's report and related matters, made a number of decisions in its resolution 2217 (XXI) of 19 December 1967 concerning the Preparatory Committee and the Conference.

5. In resolution 2217 (XXI) the General Assembly took note of the first Progress report of the Preparatory Committee and expressed its appreciation to

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the Committee for the work it had accomplished. The Assembly requested the Preparatory Committee to continue its work in accordance with paragraph 14 of Assembly resolution 2081 (XX), taking into account such observations as it might receive from the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women and bearing in mind the discussions at the twenty-first session of the General Assembly, the decisions taken in resolution 2217 C (XXI) and the adoption of the International Covenants on Human Rights, and to report further on the progress of the preparation of the Conference to the General Assembly at its twenty-second session.

6. Recognizing the significance of the Conference and the importance of the preparatory work to its success, the General Assembly decided in resolution 2217 D (XXI) to enlarge the membership of the Preparatory Committee from seventeen to twenty-three and requested the President of the General Assembly to appoint six additional members of the Committee - two from African countries, two from Asian countries and two from Latin American countries. In pursuance of this request, the President of the twenty-first session of the General Assembly, at its 1498th plenary meeting, on 19 December 1966, appointed the following countries to serve on the Preparatory Committee: Colombia, Kenya, Lebanon, Mauritania, Pakistan and Panama.

7. As a result, the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights is composed of the following Member States: Canada, Colombia, France, India, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Mauritania, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Somalia, Tunisia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.

8. As regards the Conference itself, the General Assembly in resolution 2217 C (XXI) accepted with appreciation the invitation extended by the Government of Iran to hold the International Conference on Human Rights at Teheran. A communication of 18 October 1966 received by the Secretary-General from the Permanent Representative of Iran and circulated to the General Assembly in document A/6670 states, inter alia, the following:

"It is understood that, in offering to act as host for the said conference, the Iranian Government has duly taken into consideration the preparations report of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights, contained in document A/6670 of 22 June 1966."

9. In accepting the invitation extended by the Government of Iran, the Assembly decided that the International Conference on Human Rights should preferably be held during the spring of 1968 on a date to be determined by the Secretary-General in consultation with the Preparatory Committee and the host Government.

10. The Assembly further invited States Members of the United Nations, States members of the specialized agencies, States Parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice and States that the General Assembly decides specially to invite to participate in the Conference. The competent specialized agencies were invited to send observers to the Conference.

Economic and Social Council resolutions 1126 (XLI) and 1135 (XLII)

11. In its resolutions 1126 and 1135 (XLI), the Economic and Social Council made some recommendations concerning the agenda of the Conference on Human Rights (see paragraphs 43-44 below).

Commission on Human Rights resolutions 7 (XXIII), 12 (XXIII) and 15 (XXIII)

12. The Commission on Human Rights, in resolutions 7 (XXIII), 12 (XXIII) and 15 (XXIII), made a number of suggestions and recommendations concerning a provisional agenda of the International Conference on Human Rights and documentation for the Conference (see paragraphs 45, 46 and 57 below).

Commission on the Status of Women resolution 15 (XX)

13. In accordance with the decision recorded in paragraph 17 of the first progress report of the Preparatory Committee the attention of the Commission on the Status of Women was drawn to the report (A/6670) in a note (E/CH.6/480) by the Secretary-General. In its resolution 15 (XX) of 3 March 1967, the Commission, noting that the provisional agenda of the International Conference on Human Rights included, as item 11 (c), consideration of the unified long-term United Nations programme for the advancement of women, which subject has been studied by the Commission and also by the United Nations regional seminar held in Manila during 1966, inter alia,
made a number of recommendations concerning documentation for the Conference (see paragraph 58 below). The Commission also requested the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights the summary records of the discussions at the twentieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the item "International Year for Human Rights".

Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities
resolution 3 (XIX)

14. In its resolution 3 (XIX) of 16 January 1967, entitled "Special study of racial discrimination in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres", the Sub-Commission, inter alia, requested its Special Rapporteur to proceed with the study and to present a progress report on the study to the Sub-Commission at its twentieth session. The Sub-Commission also requested the Secretary-General "to draw the Special Rapporteur's progress report to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights as documentation which might usefully be made available to the Conference".
II. DATE OF THE CONFERENCE AND REPORT ON ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR THE CONFERENCE  

25. At the 22nd meeting of the Committee, the representative of Nigeria proposed that the Preparatory Committee should express its thanks to the Government of Iran for its generous invitation extended to the International Conference on Human Rights. At its 23rd meeting the Committee unanimously adopted a resolution, as submitted by Nigeria, which reads as follows:

"The Preparatory Committee,


"Notes with deep appreciation the invitation extended by the Government of Iran for the International Conference on Human Rights, in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights in 1968, to be held in Iran;

"Requests the Secretary-General to convey a written message of thanks on behalf of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights to the Government of Iran."

26. The representative of Iran thanked the Committee for its unanimous vote of thanks which he said would greatly encourage his Government in its endeavours to ensure the complete success of the Conference. Pursuant to the Committee's request, the Secretary-General, on 17 February 1967, sent a letter to the Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations containing the text of the Committee's resolution.

27. At a later stage the Preparatory Committee heard reports from the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Iran and from the representative of the Secretary-General concerning the date and arrangements for the Conference. In the light of these reports the Committee accepted that the Conference should begin on 22 April 1968, that being a date suitable to the host Government and consistent with the United Nations conference schedule. As previously agreed the Conference would last for three weeks. The representative of Iran and the representative of the Secretary-General replied to a number of inquiries from members of the Committee about particular aspects of the arrangements for the Conference such as the nature of the accommodation available in Teheran and the conference facilities for delegations, the Secretariat, the Press and others attending the Conference. The Committee took note of the information placed before it and of the fact that arrangements for the Conference were advancing.
28. In considering the arrangements for the Conference a number of members of the Committee expressed the hope that adequate publicity would be given to it through United Nations media. The representative of the Secretary-General was able to tell the Committee that special attention was being paid both at the United Nations and in the specialized agencies to the need to publicize the Conference as well as the International Year for Human Rights as a whole.

29. Some delegations drew attention particularly to General Assembly resolution 2217 B (XXI) which called upon Governments of all countries and the people of the world to intensify the struggle to safeguard fundamental freedoms and human rights and to ensure the complete and immediate elimination of such violations of human rights as racial discrimination and the policy of apartheid.
IV. PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE

42. At its first series of meetings the Preparatory Committee had approved the draft provisional agenda of the Conference, on the understanding that it might be added to or modified as the work of the Preparatory Committee continued (A/6354, para. 31). The views expressed and the reservations made by the members of the Preparatory Committee concerning the approved draft were recorded in paragraphs 26-30 and 32-38 of the first progress report of the Preparatory Committee.

43. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1126 (XLI), considering that the observance of the International Year for Human Rights offered an opportunity for the review of the effectiveness of the United Nations action for the eradication of slavery, invited the Preparatory Committee "to place the question of slavery and the slave trade in all their practices and manifestations on the agenda of the Conference".

44. In resolution 1135 (XLI) the Council stated that it deemed it "essential that the topic of women's rights in the modern world should be included in the programme for the International Year for Human Rights and in the agenda of the International Conference on Human Rights". The Council also considered that the proposed initiation in 1968 of the unified long-term United Nations programme for the advancement of women should be an important feature of the International Year for Human Rights.

45. The Commission on Human Rights, at its twenty-third session, adopted resolution 15 (XXIII) entitled "Study of special problems relating to human rights in developing countries" in which it invited the Preparatory Committee "to consider placing this question on the agenda of the Conference."

46. At the same session the Commission adopted resolution 12 (XXIII) entitled "Measures for the speedy implementation of international instruments against racial discrimination". In that resolution, the Commission, inter alia, recommended that the General Assembly request "the International Conference on Human Rights to consider the questions of giving effect to the provisions of the Declaration and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and concerning the implementation of the conventions directed against discrimination
in employment and occupation and in education in so far as they relate to racial
discrimination”.

47. In reviewing the draft provisional agenda adopted at its first series of
meetings in the light of those recommendations from other United Nations bodies,
a number of members of the Committee commented on the problem of striking a balance
between an agenda that was widely general and an agenda over-loaded with specific
topics that could equally well be subsumed under more general headings. It was
suggested that in some cases at least the attention of the Conference might be
adequately drawn to matters raised by other United Nations organs and to specific
points raised in the discussions in the Committee, if reference were made to them
in an annotated agenda prepared by the Secretariat. After discussion of the
suggestion, the Committee decided to request the Secretariat to prepare an annotated
agenda for the Conference that would indicate the nature of the general items of the
draft agenda of the Conference by appropriate references to the documentation
prepared for the Conference and to the relevant discussions in the Preparatory
Committee. It was agreed that this annotated agenda would be designed to assist
those who attended the Conference and would in no way affect the decision of the
Conference to approve and if it so wished to alter the draft agenda presented to it.
48. The Committee agreed that slavery was a topic that should be discussed at the
Conference. There was, however, a difference of opinion as to how it should be
brought to the attention of the Conference. Some representatives expressed the
opinion that it would be sufficient if slavery was mentioned in the annotated agenda
of the Conference. Other representatives felt that it would be advisable to have
the question of slavery as a separate topic on the agenda of the Conference; and a
number of suggestions were advanced regarding the wording of such an item.
49. The representatives of Nigeria and Pakistan proposed an amendment to the title i
for the new item recommended for inclusion in the provisional agenda of the
Conference by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1126 (XLI) to read as
follows: “Question of slavery and the slave trade in all their practices and
manifestations, including slavery-like practices of apartheid and colonialism”.
In support of this formula it was stated that apartheid and colonialism manifestly had
a slavery aspect and for this reason ought properly to be considered along with
other manifestations of slavery. It was also pointed out that the wording as
proposed was consistent with that recently adopted by other United Nations organs.
Some members of the Committee, however, considered it unnecessary and unadvisable
to refer to apartheid and colonialism in an item relating to slavery, maintaining
that both apartheid and colonialism were already referred to in the provisional
agenda of the Conference under item 11 (a) and (b). These representatives proposed
that if slavery were to appear as a separate item on the agenda the wording of that
item should be the same as that contained in the relevant part of Economic and
Social Council resolution 1126 (XLI), namely: “The question of slavery and the
slave trade in all their practices and manifestations”.
50. At its 31st meeting, the Preparatory Committee, by a vote of 13 to none,
with 9 abstentions, adopted the proposal of Nigeria and Pakistan to add the
“question of slavery and the slave trade in all their practices and manifestations
including the slavery-like practices of apartheid and colonialism” among the
sub-items under item 11 of the draft provisional agenda of the Conference. The
voting was as follows:

In favour: India, Iran, Kenya, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan,
Philippines, Poland, Somalia, Tunisia, Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics and Yugoslavia.

Against: None.

Abstentions: Canada, France, Italy, Jamaica, New Zealand, Panama, United
Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of
America and Uruguay.

51. It was accepted by the Committee that the topic of women’s rights in the
modern world should be considered by the Conference. Although the draft
provisional agenda approved by the Preparatory Committee at its first series of
meetings contained a sub-item entitled “A unified long-term United Nations
programme for the advancement of women”, many representatives felt that this could
usefully be further elaborated. The Committee, accordingly, decided that the
sub-item should be reworded to read as follows: “Measures to promote women’s
rights in the modern world, including a unified long-term United Nations programme
for the advancement of women”.

52. The Committee also agreed that the special problems relating to human rights
in developing countries should receive attention from the Conference. Agreement
was reached that this particular topic could be considered under item 9 of the
provisional agenda as approved at the first series of meetings, which referred to progress achieved and major obstacles encountered at the international, regional and national levels in the field of human rights, thus covering, inter alia, particular problems affecting developing countries. It was agreed that this should be mentioned in the annotated agenda to be prepared by the Secretariat.

53. Several representatives raised the question of the bearing of population growth on the realization of human rights and the need to consider this problem at the Conference. They maintained that population growth and the related question of proper spacing of children, the welfare of the mother, the child and the family and an adequate standard of living were matters directly connected with human rights and it should be dealt with as a matter of urgency from this point of view by the Conference. While many members felt that these questions should be discussed at the Conference, some other members entertained doubts on this point.

54. It was suggested that population growth per se was not a human rights problem and had never been considered as such by the United Nations. It was further suggested that if matters related to population growth were to be brought to the attention of the Conference then there were other problems, for example that of the prevention of war and that of disarmament, that also had an obvious bearing on human rights and hence would also call for discussion at the Conference.

55. The provisional agenda for the Conference, as revised, was adopted by the Committee and is annexed to this report (annex II).