
Article 15

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Text of Article 15

1. The General Assembly shall receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council; these reports shall include an account of the measures that the Security Council has decided upon or taken to maintain international peace and security.
2. The General Assembly shall receive and consider reports from the other organs of the United Nations.

Introductory note

1. Except for the circumstances indicated below, the implementation of this Article underwent no change in practice. From the forty-fourth session up to and including the forty-ninth session, the General Assembly considered and dealt with the reports in accordance the normal procedure described in the *Repertory*.¹

¹ See the *Repertory*, volume 1, under Article 15, pp. 481 to 500.

A. Reports of the Security Council

2. During the consideration of the report of the Security Council covering the period from 16 June 1992 to 15 June 1993,² discussions focused on certain procedural measures pertaining to the Council's adoption of its annual report. The representatives of Colombia and Malaysia noted with satisfaction that the adoption of the Council's draft annual report had taken place in a public meeting of the Council and no longer in a private meeting, and that it had then been made available to all interested delegations.³ During the consideration of the annual report covering the period from 16 June 1993 to 15 June 1994,⁴ Member States again discussed, in the General Assembly, the methods adopted by the Security Council to strengthen the effectiveness of its work.⁵ On 1 November 1994, some Member States of the Assembly proposed measures to improve the information on the work of the Security Council.⁶

² Report of the Security Council, *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 2 (A/48/2)*.

³ [A/48/PV.41](#).

⁴ Report of the Security Council, *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 2 (A/49/2)*.

⁵ [A/49/PV.48](#).

⁶ [A/49/PV.49](#).

B. Reports of the Economic and Social Council

3. During the period under review, there was a noticeable tendency to expand the subjects considered by the Assembly in plenary, when considering the report of the Economic and Social Council, and to reduce correspondingly the items assigned to the Main Committees for consideration by them. Thus, at the forty-ninth session, the decision was taken to include in the items to be discussed in plenary institutional matters pertaining to the high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council, elections and the submission of candidacies and the confirmation of candidacies for the Council, matters that had previously been assigned to the Committees.⁷ Similarly, the Assembly took greater interest in the operational activities of the United Nations, formerly not among the areas it considered. Thus, at its forty-ninth session, the Assembly decided to include for its own consideration matters relating to the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance and assistance for the transition to the recovery and development phase, special economic assistance (humanitarian assistance and relief in the event of disasters), and international cooperation to mitigate the environmental

⁷ [A/49/PV.95](#), p. 20.

consequences for Kuwait and other countries of the region of the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.⁸

C. Reports of the International Court of Justice

4. During the period under review, the consideration of the reports of the International Court of Justice by the General Assembly underwent a significant evolution. Whereas it had been customary for the Assembly to take note of the report without discussion, Member States began increasingly to use the occasion to make statements on the subject of the Court. At the forty-second session, the statements made by the representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Great Britain were the exception,⁹ but after 1992 such statements became customary. The presentation of the report of the International Court of Justice to the General Assembly has become an important event for States, as can be seen from the remarks made by the representative of Denmark:

“So far there has been no tradition for opening a debate on the annual report of the International Court of Justice. The reasons may be twofold: for many years, there were very few cases, if any, to report on; and as the Court is the highest judicial organ of the world community, it may not have seemed appropriate for the General Assembly to pronounce any opinion on the disputes decided with binding effect once and for all by the Court. However, times have changed. States appear nowadays to be more ready to submit their disputes, including politically sensitive ones, to the Court in order to obtain a final and legally binding settlement of the matter.

[...]

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See *Supplement* No. 7 under Article 15.

“It is the hope of my Government that in the years to come this agenda item may be seen by Member States as an opportunity to comment upon the role and functioning of the world Court in furthering an effective international legal order. Settlement of disputes through peaceful means, including the use of the International Court of Justice, should become a normal and acceptable feature in daily international life, as is the case in all national societies governed by the rule of law.”¹⁰

5. It should also be noted that Sir Robert Jennings, President of the International Court of Justice, addressed the General Assembly directly during the presentation of the Court’s report.¹¹

D. Reports of the Secretary-General

6. During the period under review, the new Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, indicated his wish to break with the practice of his predecessor with regard to the presentation and style of his annual report. Whereas in the past the Secretary-General had limited himself to reviewing the activities of the year that had passed, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali chose, starting with his first report,¹² to distinguish between operational and institutional matters and to present the main guidelines for future work. That change was welcomed by the great majority of States, which praised the greater precision of such a presentation.¹³

¹⁰ [A/48/PV.31](#).

¹¹ [A/46/PV.44](#). The statement of the President of the Court during the presentation of the report has become standard practice.

¹² [A/47/1](#).

¹³ See, in particular, [A/48/PV.30](#).

Annex

Table listing the reports and the verbatim records of the debates in the General Assembly dealing with the reports

	<i>Secretary-General</i>	<i>Security Council</i>	<i>I.C.J.</i>	<i>Economic and Social Council</i>
1989	Report: A/44/1 GA PV: A/44/PV.32	Report: 88/89, A/44/2 GA PV: A/44/PV.79	Report: 88/89, A/44/4 GA PV: A/44/PV.43	Report: A/44/3; A/44/3/Rev.1
1990	Report: A/45/1; A/45/1 (Supplement) GA PV: A/45/PV.31	Report: 89/90, A/45/2 GA PV: A/45/PV.63	Report: 89/90, A/45/4 GA PV: A/45/PV.35	Report: A/45/3; A/45/3/Rev.1; A/45/3/Add.1; A/45/3/Add.2 GA PV: A/45/PV.71 ; A/45/PV.72
1991	Report: A/46/1 GA PV: A/46/PV.44	Report: 90/91, A/46/2 GA PV: A/46/PV.70	Report: 90/91, A/46/4 GA PV: A/46/PV.44	Report: A/46/3; A/46/3/Rev.1 GA PV: A/46/PV.75; A/46/PV.79
1992	Report: A/47/1 , A/47/1 (Supplement) GA PV: A/47/PV.107 A/47/PV.112	Report: 91/92, A/47/2 A/47/PV.106	Report: 91/92, A/47/4 GA PV: A/47/PV.32	Report: A/47/3; A/47/3/Add.1 GA PV: A/47/PV.92; A/47/PV.93; A/47/PV.94; A/47/PV.112
1993	Report: A/48/1; A/48/1 (Supplement) GA PV: A/48/PV.30 A/48/PV.31	Report: 92/93, A/48/2 GA PV: A/48/PV.41; A/48/PV.42	Report: 92/93, A/48/4 GA PV: A/48/PV.31	Report: A/48/3; A/48/3/Rev.1; A/48/3/Add.1 GA PV: A/48/PV.86 A/48/PV.87
1994	Report: A/49/1; A/49/1(Supplement) GA PV: A/49/PV.46; A/49/PV.47	Report: 93/94, A/49/2 GA PV: A/49/PV.48; A/49/PV.49	Report: 93/94, A/49/4 GA PV: A/49/PV.29	Report: A/49/3; A/49/3/Rev.1; A/49/3/Add. GA PV: A/49/PV.95