



OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/75

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling its resolution 1993/51 of 9 March 1993 and its subsequent resolutions concerning regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 32/127 of 16 December 1977 and its subsequent resolutions in this regard,

Bearing in mind the relevant resolutions of the Commission concerning advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights, including its most recent on that subject, resolution 2002/87 of 26 April 2002,

Bearing in mind also the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, which reiterates, inter alia, the need to consider the possibility of establishing regional and subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights where they do not already exist,

Recalling that the World Conference recommended that more resources should be made available for the strengthening of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights under the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Reaffirming that regional arrangements play an important role in promoting and protecting human rights and should reinforce universal human rights standards, as contained in international human rights instruments, and their protection,

Noting the progress achieved thus far in the promotion and protection of human rights at the regional level under the auspices of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the regional intergovernmental organizations,

Considering that cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the field of human rights continues to be both substantive and supportive and that possibilities exist for increased cooperation,

Welcoming the fact that the Office of the High Commissioner has been systematically pursuing a regional and subregional approach through a variety of complementary means and methods in order to maximize the impact of the activities of the United Nations at the national level,

1. *Takes notes with satisfaction* of the report of the Secretary-General on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights (E/CN.4/2003/107);

2. *Welcomes* the continuing cooperation and assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the further strengthening of the existing regional arrangements and regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular through technical cooperation which is aimed at national capacity-building, public information and education, with a view to exchanging information and experience in the field of human rights;

3. *Also welcomes*, in that respect, the close cooperation of the Office of the High Commissioner in the organization of regional and subregional training courses and workshops in the field of human rights, high-level governmental expert meetings and regional conferences of national human rights institutions, aimed at creating greater understanding in the regions of issues concerning the promotion and protection of human rights, improving procedures and examining the various systems for the promotion and protection of universally accepted human rights standards and identifying obstacles to ratification of the principal international human rights treaties and strategies to overcome them;

4. *Recognizes*, therefore, that progress in promoting and protecting all human rights depends primarily on efforts made at the national and local levels, and that the regional approach should imply intensive cooperation and coordination with all partners involved, while bearing in mind the importance of international cooperation;

5. *Stresses* the importance of the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights, renews its appeal to all Governments to consider making use of the possibilities offered by the United Nations under this programme of organizing information or training courses at the national level for government personnel on the application of international human rights standards and the experience of relevant international bodies, and notes with satisfaction, in that respect, the establishment of technical cooperation projects with Governments of all regions;

6. *Welcomes* the growing exchanges between the United Nations and the bodies created by the United Nations in accordance with the treaties dealing with human rights, on the one hand, and regional intergovernmental organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and other regional institutions, on the other;

7. *Also welcomes* the placement by the Office of the High Commissioner of regional representatives in subregions and in regional commissions to allow for closer working relations with States, international and regional organizations as well as with non-governmental organizations;

8. *Welcomes* the progress achieved in the establishment of regional and subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, and in this regard, notes with interest:

(a) The positive experience of the regional and subregional presence of the Office of the High Commissioner in southern, central, eastern and western Africa, as illustrated by the creation of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa in Yaoundé;

(b) The results of the African regional dialogues held in Geneva and Arusha from 5 to 7 November 2001 and 24 to 26 May 2002, respectively, in providing guidance to Governments, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations as well as better links with the African Union and other subregional organizations;

(c) The increased, valuable sharing of concrete national experiences at the tenth and eleventh Workshops on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region, held in Beirut and Islamabad from 4 to 6 March 2002 and from 25 to 27 February 2003, respectively, regarding the implementation of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation in the Asian-Pacific Region, which contributes to the enhancement of the promotion and protection of human rights in the region;

(d) The Quito Framework for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, which serves as a basis for the regional strategy of the Office of the High Commissioner, aimed at strengthening national capacities for the promotion of human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in this regard welcomes the meeting on the enforcement of the system of treaty bodies held in Quito in August 2002;

(e) The efforts made by the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to improve the coordination between regional and United Nations mechanisms in the field of human rights;

(f) The continued cooperation, in particular for activities at the country level, between regional organizations in Europe, namely the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Union, and in Central Asia and the Office of the High Commissioner, as well as the agreements between the European Commission and the Office for financing technical cooperation projects;

(g) The holding of the International Conference on Human Rights and Democratization in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from 8 to 10 October 2001, co-organized by the Office of the High Commissioner, the Government of Croatia and the European Commission, which provided the opportunity to review developments in the field of human rights in the region;

9. *Invites* States in areas in which regional arrangements in the field of human rights do not yet exist to consider concluding agreements with a view to establishing, within their respective regions, suitable regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen exchanges between the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations dealing with human rights and to make available adequate resources from within the regular budget of technical cooperation to the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner to promote regional arrangements;

11. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to pay special attention to the most appropriate ways of assisting countries of the various regions, at their request, under the programme of technical cooperation and to make, where necessary, relevant recommendations, and in this regard takes note with interest of the intention of the High Commissioner to make use of the regional approach to strengthen human rights-related United Nations actions at the country level in the framework of the Secretary-General's process of reform of the United Nations;

12. *Invites* the Secretary-General, in the report he will submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, to provide information on progress made since the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on reinforcing the exchange of information and extending collaboration between the organs of the United Nations dealing with human rights and regional organizations in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its sixty-first session a report on the state of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, to formulate concrete proposals and recommendations on ways and means to strengthen cooperation between United Nations and regional arrangements in the field of human rights and to include therein the results of action taken in pursuance of the present resolution;

14. *Decides* to consider this question further at its sixty-first session.

*62nd meeting
25 April 2003*
[Adopted without a vote.]

See chap. XVIII. - E/CN.4/2003/L.11/Add.7]