

4. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General,<sup>103</sup> called for under General Assembly resolution 33/178 of 20 December 1978, on replies to the questionnaire;

5. *Calls upon* Member States which have not yet done so to reply to the questionnaire, as called for under General Assembly resolutions 32/63 and 33/178;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session further information provided in response to the questionnaire, and to submit all the information available which he has received on the basis of the questionnaire to the Commission on Human Rights, to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and to the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders;

7. *Takes note also* of the report of the Secretary-General<sup>104</sup> on unilateral declarations, called for under General Assembly resolutions 32/64 and 33/178;

8. *Invites* Member States which have not yet done so to deposit the unilateral declarations with the Secretary-General, as called for under General Assembly resolutions 32/64 and 33/178;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to inform the General Assembly, in annual reports, of unilateral declarations already deposited and of such further unilateral declarations as may be deposited by Member States;

10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-fifth session the item entitled "Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment", for the purpose of reviewing the progress achieved under this item.

*106th plenary meeting  
17 December 1979*

#### 34/168. Draft Code of Medical Ethics

*The General Assembly,*

*Mindful* of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 3452 (XXX) of 9 December 1975,

*Noting* that, in the report submitted by the World Health Organization to the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders,<sup>105</sup> it was suggested that a "Health Charter for Prisoners" might be elaborated with the co-operation of the World Health Organization,

*Recalling* its resolutions 3218 (XXIX) of 6 November 1974, 3453 (XXX) of 9 December 1975 and 31/85 of 13 December 1976, in which it invited the World Health Organization to prepare a draft code of medical ethics relevant to the protection of persons subjected to any form of detention or imprisonment against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

*Having considered* the note by the Secretary-General<sup>106</sup> transmitting to the members of the General Assembly the report of the World Health Organization on the development of codes of medical ethics,

*Noting with appreciation* that the Executive Board of the World Health Organization has endorsed the principles set forth in the report of its Director-General on the development of codes of medical ethics and has requested its Director-General to transmit that report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the draft Code of Medical Ethics<sup>107</sup> to Member States, the specialized agencies concerned and interested intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council for comments and suggestions, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session;

2. *Decides* to consider again the question of the draft Code of Medical Ethics at its thirty-fifth session, under the item entitled "Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

*106th plenary meeting  
17 December 1979*

#### 34/169. Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials

*The General Assembly,*

*Considering* that the purposes proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations include the achievement of international co-operation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

*Recalling*, in particular, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>108</sup> and the International Covenants on Human Rights,<sup>109</sup>

*Recalling also* the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 3452 (XXX) of 9 December 1975,

*Mindful* that the nature of the functions of law enforcement in the defence of public order and the manner in which those functions are exercised have a direct impact on the quality of life of individuals as well as of society as a whole,

*Conscious* of the important task which law enforcement officials are performing diligently and with dignity, in compliance with the principles of human rights,

*Aware*, nevertheless, of the potential for abuse which the exercise of such duties entails,

*Recognizing* that the establishment of a code of conduct for law enforcement officials is only one of several important measures for providing the citizenry served by law enforcement officials with protection of all their rights and interests,

*Aware* that there are additional important principles and prerequisites for the humane performance of law enforcement functions, namely:

(a) That, like all agencies of the criminal justice system, every law enforcement agency should be representative of and responsive and accountable to the community as a whole,

<sup>103</sup> A/34/144.

<sup>104</sup> A/34/145 and Add.1-3.

<sup>105</sup> A/CONF.56/9.

<sup>106</sup> A/34/273.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, annex.

<sup>108</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>109</sup> Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

(b) That the effective maintenance of ethical standards among law enforcement officials depends on the existence of a well-conceived, popularly accepted and humane system of laws,

(c) That every law enforcement official is part of the criminal justice system, the aim of which is to prevent and control crime, and that the conduct of every functionary within the system has an impact on the entire system,

(d) That every law enforcement agency, in fulfilment of the first premise of every profession, should be held to the duty of disciplining itself in complete conformity with the principles and standards herein provided and that the actions of law enforcement officials should be responsive to public scrutiny, whether exercised by a review board, a ministry, a procuracy, the judiciary, an ombudsman, a citizens' committee or any combination thereof, or any other reviewing agency,

(e) That standards as such lack practical value unless their content and meaning, through education and training and through monitoring, become part of the creed of every law enforcement official,

*Adopts* the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials set forth in the annex to the present resolution and decides to transmit it to Governments with the recommendation that favourable consideration should be given to its use within the framework of national legislation or practice as a body of principles for observance by law enforcement officials.

*106th plenary meeting  
17 December 1979*

## ANNEX

### Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials

#### Article 1

Law enforcement officials shall at all times fulfil the duty imposed upon them by law, by serving the community and by protecting all persons against illegal acts, consistent with the high degree of responsibility required by their profession.

#### *Commentary:*<sup>110</sup>

(a) The term "law enforcement officials" includes all officers of the law, whether appointed or elected, who exercise police powers, especially the powers of arrest or detention.

(b) In countries where police powers are exercised by military authorities, whether uniformed or not, or by state security forces, the definition of law enforcement officials shall be regarded as including officers of such services.

(c) Service to the community is intended to include particularly the rendition of services of assistance to those members of the community who by reason of personal, economic, social or other emergencies are in need of immediate aid.

(d) This provision is intended to cover not only all violent, predatory and harmful acts, but extends to the full range of prohibitions under penal statutes. It extends to conduct by persons not capable of incurring criminal liability.

#### Article 2

In the performance of their duty, law enforcement officials shall respect and protect human dignity and maintain and uphold the human rights of all persons.

<sup>110</sup> The commentaries provide information to facilitate the use of the Code within the framework of national legislation or practice. In addition, national or regional commentaries could identify specific features of the legal systems and practices of different States or regional intergovernmental organizations which would promote the application of the Code.

#### *Commentary:*

(a) The human rights in question are identified and protected by national and international law. Among the relevant international instruments are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of *Apartheid*, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

(b) National commentaries to this provision should indicate regional or national provisions identifying and protecting these rights.

#### Article 3

Law enforcement officials may use force only when strictly necessary and to the extent required for the performance of their duty.

#### *Commentary:*

(a) This provision emphasizes that the use of force by law enforcement officials should be exceptional; while it implies that law enforcement officials may be authorized to use force as is reasonably necessary under the circumstances for the prevention of crime or in effecting or assisting in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders, no force going beyond that may be used.

(b) National law ordinarily restricts the use of force by law enforcement officials in accordance with a principle of proportionality. It is to be understood that such national principles of proportionality are to be respected in the interpretation of this provision. In no case should this provision be interpreted to authorize the use of force which is disproportionate to the legitimate objective to be achieved.

(c) The use of firearms is considered an extreme measure. Every effort should be made to exclude the use of firearms, especially against children. In general, firearms should not be used except when a suspected offender offers armed resistance or otherwise jeopardizes the lives of others and less extreme measures are not sufficient to restrain or apprehend the suspected offender. In every instance in which a firearm is discharged, a report should be made promptly to the competent authorities.

#### Article 4

Matters of a confidential nature in the possession of law enforcement officials shall be kept confidential, unless the performance of duty or the needs of justice strictly require otherwise.

#### *Commentary:*

By the nature of their duties, law enforcement officials obtain information which may relate to private lives or be potentially harmful to the interests, and especially the reputation, of others. Great care should be exercised in safeguarding and using such information, which should be disclosed only in the performance of duty or to serve the needs of justice. Any disclosure of such information for other purposes is wholly improper.

#### Article 5

No law enforcement official may inflict, instigate or tolerate any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, nor may any law enforcement official invoke superior orders or exceptional circumstances such as a state of war or a threat of war, a threat to national security, internal political instability or any other public emergency as a justification of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

#### *Commentary:*

(a) This prohibition derives from the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture

and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted by the General Assembly, according to which:

"[Such an act is] an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned as a denial of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [and other international human rights instruments]."

(b) The Declaration defines torture as follows:

"... torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted by or at the instigation of a public official on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or confession, punishing him for an act he has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating him or other persons. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to, lawful sanctions to the extent consistent with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners."<sup>111</sup>

(c) The term "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" has not been defined by the General Assembly but should be interpreted so as to extend the widest possible protection against abuses, whether physical or mental.

#### Article 6

Law enforcement officials shall ensure the full protection of the health of persons in their custody and, in particular, shall take immediate action to secure medical attention whenever required.

#### Commentary:

(a) "Medical attention", which refers to services rendered by any medical personnel, including certified medical practitioners and paramedics, shall be secured when needed or requested.

(b) While the medical personnel are likely to be attached to the law enforcement operation, law enforcement officials must take into account the judgement of such personnel when they recommend providing the person in custody with appropriate treatment through, or in consultation with, medical personnel from outside the law enforcement operation.

(c) It is understood that law enforcement officials shall also secure medical attention for victims of violations of law or of accidents occurring in the course of violations of law.

#### Article 7

Law enforcement officials shall not commit any act of corruption. They shall also rigorously oppose and combat all such acts.

#### Commentary:

(a) Any act of corruption, in the same way as any other abuse of authority, is incompatible with the profession of law enforcement officials. The law must be enforced fully with respect to any law enforcement official who commits an act of corruption, as Governments cannot expect to enforce the law among their citizens if they cannot, or will not, enforce the law against their own agents and within their own agencies.

(b) While the definition of corruption must be subject to national law, it should be understood to encompass the commission or omission of an act in the performance of or in connexion with one's duties, in response to gifts, promises or incentives demanded or accepted, or the wrongful receipt of these once the act has been committed or omitted.

(c) The expression "act of corruption" referred to above should be understood to encompass attempted corruption.

#### Article 8

Law enforcement officials shall respect the law and the present Code. They shall also, to the best of their capability, prevent and rigorously oppose any violations of them.

<sup>111</sup> First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders: report prepared by the Secretariat (United Nations publication, Sales No. 1956.IV.4), annex I.A.

Law enforcement officials who have reason to believe that a violation of the present Code has occurred or is about to occur shall report the matter to their superior authorities and, where necessary, to other appropriate authorities or organs vested with reviewing or remedial power.

#### Commentary:

(a) This Code shall be observed whenever it has been incorporated into national legislation or practice. If legislation or practice contains stricter provisions than those of the present Code, those stricter provisions shall be observed.

(b) The article seeks to preserve the balance between the need for internal discipline of the agency on which public safety is largely dependent, on the one hand, and the need for dealing with violations of basic human rights, on the other. Law enforcement officials shall report violations within the chain of command and take other lawful action outside the chain of command only when no other remedies are available or effective. It is understood that law enforcement officials shall not suffer administrative or other penalties because they have reported that a violation of this Code has occurred or is about to occur.

(c) The term "appropriate authorities or organs vested with reviewing or remedial power" refers to any authority or organ existing under national law, whether internal to the law enforcement agency or independent thereof, with statutory, customary or other power to review grievances and complaints arising out of violations within the purview of this Code.

(d) In some countries, the mass media may be regarded as performing complaint review functions similar to those described in subparagraph (c) above. Law enforcement officials may, therefore, be justified if, as a last resort and in accordance with the laws and customs of their own countries and with the provisions of article 4 of the present Code, they bring violations to the attention of public opinion through the mass media.

(e) Law enforcement officials who comply with the provisions of this Code deserve the respect, the full support and the co-operation of the community and of the law enforcement agency in which they serve, as well as the law enforcement profession.

### 34/170. The right to education

#### The General Assembly,

Recalling the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 2200 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, which recognizes the right of everyone to education,

Bearing in mind the importance of the Convention against Discrimination in Education,<sup>112</sup> adopted on 14 December 1960 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Convinced of the topicality of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2542 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969, containing the Declaration on Social Progress and Development which, *inter alia*, stresses the importance of the training of national personnel and cadres for the over-all development of society,

Emphasizing the paramount importance of the implementation of the right to education for the full development of human personality and for the enjoyment of other fundamental human rights and freedoms,

Considering that the educational process could bring a substantial contribution to social progress, national development, mutual understanding and co-operation among peoples and to strengthening peace and international security,

<sup>112</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 429, No. 6193, p. 93.