

## CHAPTER II

### Overview of the present working methods of the Committee

25. This chapter of the Committee's report aims at providing a concise and up-to-date overview and explanation of the ways in which the Committee carries out its various functions. It is designed to make the Committee's current practice more transparent and readily accessible so as to assist States parties and others interested in the implementation of the Covenant.

26. Since its first session, in 1987, the Committee has made a concerted effort to devise appropriate working methods which adequately reflect the nature of the tasks with which it has been entrusted. In the course of its 29 sessions it has sought to modify and develop these methods in the light of its experience. These methods will continue to evolve.

#### A. General guidelines for reporting

27. The Committee attaches major importance to the need to structure the reporting process and the dialogue with each State party's representatives in such a way as to ensure that the issues of principal concern to it are dealt with in a methodical and informative manner. For this purpose, the Committee has adopted detailed reporting guidelines<sup>1</sup> with a view to assisting States in the reporting process and improving the effectiveness of the monitoring system as a whole. The Committee strongly urges all States parties to report to it in accordance with the guidelines to the greatest extent possible. The Committee keeps its guidelines under review and they are updated when appropriate.

#### B. Examination of States parties' reports

##### 1. Work of the pre-sessional working group

28. A pre-sessional working group meets, for five days, prior to each of the Committee's sessions. It is composed of five members of the Committee nominated by the Chairperson, taking account of the desirability of a balanced geographical distribution and other relevant factors.

29. The principal purpose of the working group is to identify in advance the questions which will constitute the principal focus of the dialogue with the representatives of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 3 (E/1991/23-E/C.12/1990/8), annex IV.*

reporting States. The aim is to improve the efficiency of the system and to ease the task of States' representatives by facilitating more focused preparations for the discussion.<sup>2</sup>

30. It is generally accepted that the complex nature and diverse range of many of the issues raised in connection with the implementation of the Covenant constitute a strong argument in favour of providing States parties with the possibility of preparing in advance to answer some of the principal questions arising out of their reports. Such an arrangement also enhances the likelihood that the State party will be able to provide precise and detailed information.

31. With regard to its own working methods, the working group, in the interests of efficiency, allocates to each of its members initial responsibility for undertaking a detailed review of a specific number of reports and for putting before the working group a preliminary list of issues. The decision as to how the reports should be allocated for this purpose is based in part on the areas of expertise of the member concerned. Each draft by a country rapporteur is then revised and supplemented on the basis of observations by the other members of the working group and the final version of the list is adopted by the working group as a whole. This procedure applies equally to both initial and periodic reports.

32. In preparation for the pre-sessional working group, the Committee has asked the secretariat to place at the disposal of its members a country profile as well as all pertinent documents containing information relevant to each of the reports to be examined. For this purpose, the Committee invites all concerned individuals, bodies and non-governmental organizations to submit relevant and appropriate documentation to the secretariat. It has also asked the secretariat to ensure that certain types of information are regularly placed in the country files.

33. The lists of issues drawn up by the working group are given directly to a representative of the States concerned, along with a copy of the Committee's most recent report and with a note stating the following:

“The list is not intended to be exhaustive and it should not be interpreted as limiting or in any other way prejudging the type and range of questions which members of the Committee might wish to ask. However, the Committee believes that the constructive dialogue which it wishes to have with the representatives of the State party is greatly facilitated by making the list available in advance of the Committee's session. In order to improve the dialogue that the Committee seeks, it strongly urges each State party to provide in writing its replies to the list of issues and to do so sufficiently in advance of the session at which its report will be considered to enable the replies to be translated and made available to all members of the Committee.”

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1988, *Supplement No. 4* (E/1988/14-E/C.12/1988/4), chap. IV, para. 361.

34. In addition to the task of formulating the lists of issues, the pre-sessional working group is also entrusted with a variety of other tasks designed to facilitate the work of the Committee as a whole. These have included: discussing the most appropriate allocation of time for the consideration of each State report; considering the issue of how best to respond to supplementary reports containing additional information; examining draft general comments; considering how best to structure the day of general discussion; and other relevant matters.

## **2. Consideration of the report**

35. In accordance with the established practice of each of the United Nations human rights treaty monitoring bodies, representatives of the reporting States are entitled to be present, and indeed their presence and participation are necessary, at the meetings of the Committee when their reports are examined in order to ensure a constructive dialogue with the Committee. The following procedure is generally used: the representative of the State party is invited to introduce the report by making brief introductory comments and introducing any written replies to the list of issues drawn up by the pre-sessional working group. The Committee then considers the report by clusters of articles (usually 1-5, 6-9, 10-12, 13-15), taking particular account of the replies furnished in response to the list of issues. The Chairperson will normally invite questions or comments from Committee members in relation to each issue and then invite the representatives of the State party to reply immediately to questions that do not require further reflection or research. Other questions remaining to be answered are taken up at a subsequent meeting or, if necessary, may be the subject of additional information provided to the Committee in writing. Members of the Committee are free to pursue specific issues in the light of the replies thus provided, although the Committee has urged them not to (a) raise issues outside the scope of the Covenant; (b) repeat questions already posed or answered; (c) add unduly to an already long list on a particular issue; or (d) speak more than five minutes in any one intervention. Representatives of relevant specialized agencies and other international bodies may also be invited to contribute at any stage of the dialogue.

36. The final phase of the Committee's examination of the report consists of the drafting and adoption of its concluding observations. For this purpose, the Committee usually sets aside a brief period in closed session, the day after the conclusion of the dialogue, to enable its members to express their preliminary views. The country rapporteur then prepares, with the assistance of the secretariat, a draft set of concluding observations for consideration by the Committee. The agreed structure of the concluding observations is as follows: introduction; positive aspects; factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Covenant; principal subjects of concern; and suggestions and recommendations. At a later stage, the Committee then discusses the draft, again in private session, with a view to adopting it by consensus.

37. The concluding observations, once formally adopted, are usually not made public until the final day of the session. As soon as they are made public - at 6 p.m. of the closing day of the session - they are available to all interested parties. They are forwarded as soon as possible to the State party concerned and included in the Committee's report. If it so wishes, the State party may address any of the Committee's

concluding observations in the context of any additional information which it provides to the Committee.

38. In general, the Committee devotes three meetings (of three hours each) to its public examination of States parties' reports. In addition, it generally devotes between two and three hours towards the end of the session, in private, to its discussion of each set of concluding observations.

### **3. Deferrals of the consideration of reports**

39. Last-minute requests by States to defer the consideration of a report which has been scheduled for examination at a particular session are extremely disruptive for all concerned and have caused major problems for the Committee in the past. Accordingly, the Committee's long-standing policy is not to grant such requests and to proceed with its consideration of all scheduled reports, even in the absence of a representative of the State party concerned.

#### **C. Follow-up procedure in relation to the consideration of reports**

40. At its twenty-first session,<sup>3</sup> the Committee decided that:

(a) In all concluding observations, the Committee will request the State party to inform the Committee, in its next periodic report, about steps taken to implement the recommendations in the concluding observations;

(b) Where appropriate, the Committee may, in its concluding observations, make a specific request to a State party to provide more information or statistical data at a time prior to the date that the next periodic report is due to be submitted;

(c) Where appropriate, the Committee may, in its concluding observations, ask the State party to respond to any pressing specific issue identified in the concluding observations prior to the date that the next report is due to be submitted;

(d) Any information provided in accordance with (b) and (c) above will be considered by the next meeting of the Committee's pre-sessional working group;

(e) In general, the working group could recommend one or another of the following responses to the Committee:

(i) That it take note of such information;

(ii) That it adopt specific additional concluding observations in response to that information;

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<sup>3</sup> On 1 December 1999 (53rd meeting).

- (iii) That the matter be pursued through a request for further information; or
- (iv) That the Committee's Chairperson be authorized to inform the State party, in advance of the next session, that the Committee will take up the issue at its next session and that, for that purpose, the participation of a representative of the State party in the work of the Committee would be welcome;

(f) If the information requested in accordance with (b) and (c) is not provided by the specified date, or is patently unsatisfactory, the Chairperson, in consultation with the members of the Bureau, could be authorized to follow up the matter with the State party.

41. In situations in which the Committee considers that it is unable to obtain the information it requires on the basis of the above-mentioned procedures, it may decide to adopt a different approach instead. In particular, the Committee may request that the State party concerned accept a mission consisting of one or two members of the Committee. Such a decision would be taken only after the Committee had satisfied itself that there was no adequate alternative approach available to it and that the information in its possession warranted such an approach. The purposes of such an on-site visit would be: (a) to collect the information necessary for the Committee to continue its constructive dialogue with the State party and to enable it to carry out its functions in relation to the Covenant; (b) to provide a more comprehensive basis upon which the Committee might exercise its functions in relation to articles 22 and 23 of the Covenant concerning technical assistance and advisory services. The Committee would state specifically the issue(s) with respect to which its representative(s) would seek to gather information from all available sources. The representative(s) would also have the task of considering whether the programme of advisory services administered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights could be of assistance in connection with the specific issue at hand.

42. At the conclusion of the visit, the representative(s) would report to the Committee. In the light of the report presented by its representative(s), the Committee would then formulate its own conclusions. Those conclusions would relate to the full range of functions carried out by the Committee, including those relating to technical assistance and advisory services.

43. This procedure has already been applied in relation to two States parties and the Committee considers the experience to have been a very positive one in both instances. In a case where the State party concerned did not accept the proposed mission, the Committee would consider making whatever recommendations might be appropriate to the Economic and Social Council.

#### **D. Procedure in response to non-submitted and considerably overdue reports**

44. The Committee believes that a situation of persistent non-reporting by States parties risks bringing the entire supervisory procedure into disrepute, thereby undermining one of the foundations of the Covenant.

45. Accordingly, the Committee resolved at its sixth session to begin in due course to consider the situation concerning the implementation of the Covenant in respect of each State party whose reports are very significantly overdue. At its seventh session it resolved to begin scheduling consideration of such reports at its future sessions and to notify the States parties concerned. It began to apply this procedure at its ninth session.

46. The Committee has adopted the following procedure:

(a) To select States parties whose reports are very much overdue on the basis of the length of time involved;

(b) To notify each such State party that the Committee intends to consider the situation with respect to that country at a specified future session;

(c) To move, in the absence of any report, to consider the status of economic, social and cultural rights in the light of all available information;

(d) To authorize its Chairperson, in situations where the State party concerned indicates that a report will be provided to the Committee and upon a request from the State party, to defer consideration of the situation for one session.

#### **E. Day of general discussion**

47. At each session, the Committee devotes one day, usually the Monday of the third week, to a general discussion of a particular right or of a particular aspect of the Covenant. The purpose is twofold: the day assists the Committee in developing in greater depth its understanding of the relevant issues; and it enables the Committee to encourage inputs into its work from all interested parties. The issues which have been the focus of discussions held to date by the Committee may be found in annex X to the present report.

#### **F. Other consultations**

48. The Committee has sought to coordinate its activities with those of other bodies to the greatest extent possible and to draw as widely as it can on available expertise in the fields of its competence. For this purpose, it has consistently invited individuals such as special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights and of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, chairpersons of Commission working groups and others to address it and engage in discussions.

49. The Committee has also sought to draw on the expertise of the relevant specialized agencies and United Nations organs, both in its work as a whole and, more particularly, in the context of its general discussions.

50. In addition, the Committee has invited a variety of experts who have a particular interest in, and knowledge of, some of the issues under review to contribute to its discussions. These contributions have added considerably to its understanding of some aspects of the questions arising under the Covenant.

### **G. Participation of non-governmental organizations in the activities of the Committee**

51. In order to ensure that the Committee is as well informed as possible, it provides opportunities for non-governmental organizations to submit relevant information to it.<sup>4</sup> They may do this in writing at any time. The Committee's pre-sessional working group is also open to the submission of information in person or in writing from any non-governmental organizations, provided that it relates to matters on the agenda of the working group. In addition, the Committee sets aside part of the first afternoon at each of its sessions to enable representatives of non-governmental organizations to provide oral information. Such information should: (a) focus specifically on the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; (b) be of direct relevance to matters under consideration by the Committee; (c) be reliable; (d) not be abusive. The relevant meeting is open and provided with interpretation and press services, but is not covered by summary records.

52. The Committee has requested the secretariat to ensure that any written information formally submitted to it by individuals or non-governmental organizations in relation to the consideration of a specific State party report is made available as soon as possible to the representative of the State concerned. The Committee therefore assumes that if any of this information is referred to during the dialogue with the State party, the latter will already be aware of the information.

### **H. General comments\***

53. In response to an invitation addressed to it by the Economic and Social Council, the Committee decided to begin, as from its third session, the preparation of general comments based on the various articles and provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with a view to assisting the States parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations.

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<sup>4</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 2* (E/2001/22-E/C.12/2000/21), annex V: "Non-governmental organizations participation in the activities of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights".

\* For the list of general comments adopted to date by the Committee, see annex VIII below.

54. By the end of its twenty-ninth session, the Committee and the sessional working group of governmental experts, which existed prior to the creation of the Committee had examined 153 initial reports, 71 second periodic reports concerning rights covered by articles 6 to 9, 10 to 12 and 13 to 15 of the Covenant, and 105 comprehensive reports. This work covered a significant number of the States parties to the Covenant, which totalled 146 at the end of the twenty-ninth session. They represented all regions of the world, with different political, legal, socio-economic and cultural systems. Their reports submitted so far have illustrated many of the problems which might arise in implementing the Covenant, although they had not yet provided any complete picture of the global situation with regard to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

55. The Committee endeavours, through its general comments, to make the experience gained so far through the examination of States' reports available for the benefit of all States parties in order to assist and promote their further implementation of the Covenant; to draw the attention of the States parties to insufficiencies disclosed by a large number of reports; to suggest improvements in the reporting procedures; and to stimulate the activities of the States parties, international organizations and the specialized agencies concerned in achieving progressively and effectively the full realization of the rights recognized in the Covenant. Whenever necessary, the Committee may, in the light of the experience of States parties and of the conclusions drawn therefrom, revise and update its general comments.

56. At its twenty-first session, the Committee adopted the outline for drafting general comments on specific rights of the Covenant.<sup>5</sup> The Committee agreed that the subject matter of a particular general comment would influence the overall structure of that comment and observed that the outline was not intended to be strictly adhered to. However, the outline provided useful signposts, a checklist of issues, to be considered in the process of drafting a general comment. In this respect, the outline would assist in ensuring consistency in the content, format and ambit of general comments to be adopted by the Committee. The Committee emphasized the importance of ensuring that general comments are reader-friendly and readily understandable to a broad range of readers, primarily States parties to the Covenant. The outline will assist in ensuring consistency and clarity in the structure of the general comments, thus promoting their accessibility, and strengthening the authoritative interpretation of the Covenant provided by the Committee through its general comments.

### **I. Statements adopted by the Committee**

57. With a view to assisting States parties to the Covenant, the Committee adopts statements to clarify and confirm its position with respect to major international developments and issues that bear upon the implementation of the Covenant. As at 29 November 2002, the Committee had adopted 15 statements, a list of which appears in annex IX to the present report.

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<sup>5</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 2 (E/2000/22-E/C.12/1999/11 and Corr.1), annex IX.*



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## CHAPTER VI

### **Decisions adopted and matters discussed by the Committee at its twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth sessions**

#### **A. Follow-up procedure in relation to the consideration of periodic reports submitted by States parties**

641. The follow-up procedure in relation to the consideration of reports was outlined by the Committee at its twenty-first session (see above, chap. II, para. 40) and subsequently revised and approved at its twenty-ninth session (11 to 29 November 2002).

##### **1. Next periodic report**

642. The regular reporting cycle is a five-year period. Strict compliance by States parties with reporting obligations is a *conditio sine qua non* for the effective monitoring by the Committee of the compliance by States parties with their obligations under the Covenant.

643. In all its concluding observations, the Committee will request the State party to inform the Committee, in its next periodic report, about steps taken to implement the recommendations in the concluding observations.

##### **2. Additional information**

644. When appropriate, the Committee may, in its concluding observations, request the State party to submit additional information at a time prior to the date that the next periodic report is due to be submitted. Any information provided by a State party under this procedure will be published as additional information submitted by the State party following the Committee's consideration of its report.\*

645. The additional information will be considered by the next meeting of the Committee's pre-sessional working group, which could recommend to the Committee:

- (i) That it take note of such information;
- (ii) That it adopt specific concluding observations in response to that information;
- (iii) That the matter be pursued through a request for further information; or

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\* Published as an addendum in the E/1989/5 series.

- (iv) That the Committee's Chairperson be authorized to inform the State party, in advance of the next session, that the Committee will take up the issue at its next session and that, for that purpose, the participation of a representative of the State party in the work of the Committee would be welcome.

646. If the additional information requested by the Committee is not provided by the set date, or is patently unsatisfactory, the Chairperson, in consultation with the members of the Bureau, could be authorized to follow up the matter with the State party concerned.

### **3. The offer of a technical assistance mission**

647. In situations in which the Committee considers that it is unable to obtain the information it requires on the basis of the above-mentioned procedures, it may decide to adopt a different approach instead. In particular, the Committee may request that the State party concerned accept a mission consisting of one or two members of the Committee. Such a decision would be taken only after the Committee had satisfied itself that there was no adequate alternative approach available to it and that the information in its possession warranted such an approach. The purposes of such an on-site visit would be: (a) to collect the information necessary for the Committee to continue its constructive dialogue with the State party and to enable it to carry out its functions in relation to the Covenant; (b) to provide a more comprehensive basis upon which the Committee might exercise its functions in relation to articles 22 and 23 of the Covenant concerning technical assistance and advisory services. The Committee would state specifically the issue(s) with respect to which its representative(s) would seek to gather information from all available sources. The representative(s) would also have the task of considering whether the programme of advisory services administered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights could be of assistance in connection with the specific issue at hand. Such a decision by the Committee is subject to the approval of its parent body, the Economic and Social Council, and acceptance of such a mission by the State party concerned.

648. At the conclusion of the visit, the representative(s) will report to the Committee. In the light of this report presented by its representative(s), the Committee will then formulate its own conclusions and recommendations. Those conclusions may relate to the full range of functions carried out by the Committee, including those relating to technical assistance and advisory services.

649. This procedure has already been applied in relation to two States parties and the Committee considers the experience to have been a very positive one in both instances. In a case where the State party concerned did not accept the proposed mission, the Committee would consider making whatever recommendations might be appropriate to the Economic and Social Council.

#### **4. United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, special-procedures mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

650. Whenever appropriate, the Committee, in line with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2001/30 of 20 April 2001, may in its concluding observations recommend to the United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, and to relevant special-procedures mechanisms of the Commission, that it consider the possibility, within the scope of their respective mandates, of assisting the State party concerned in implementing relevant recommendations contained in the Committee's concluding observations.

#### **5. Comments by States parties on concluding observations**

651. Following the adoption by the Committee of concluding observations, if the relevant State party submits to the Committee its comments on the concluding observations, these comments will be published, as submitted, as a Committee document and referenced in the Committee's annual report. Such comments by a State party will be published for information purposes only.

#### **B. Consideration of periodic reports submitted by States parties**

652. For some years, the Committee devoted three meetings to its consideration of both initial and subsequent periodic reports. However, during its twenty-fifth session, the Committee decided, on an experimental basis, to devote only two meetings to consideration of periodic reports and three meetings to consideration of initial reports. The Committee is constantly striving to improve its working methods and this experimental reform was one of several measures that the Committee hoped would enhance its efficiency. Accordingly, at its twenty-sixth to twenty-ninth sessions, the Committee devoted only two meetings (i.e. six hours) to its consideration of periodic reports.

653. The Committee monitored this reform most carefully and, at its twenty-ninth session considered whether or not the experiment had proved successful and should be continued. The Committee formed the view that, in the light of experience, it could not adequately discharge its monitoring obligations, in relation to periodic reports, in only six hours. Thus, the Committee decided to revert to three meetings for both initial and periodic reports. The Committee also resolved to continue to identify and implement improvements in its working methods that would save time and resources without compromising its ability to discharge its monitoring obligations.

#### **C. Meeting of the Committee with the States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

654. At its twenty-eighth session, on 14 May 2002, the Committee held its first meeting with States parties to the Covenant. In accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at its twenty-sixth session, the meeting was devoted to the discussion of the methods of work of the Committee (see above, chap. V, sect. C, paras. 636-640).

#### **D. Cooperation with specialized agencies**

655. At its twenty-eighth session, on 14 May 2002, the Committee held a meeting, organized in cooperation with UNESCO, on follow-up to the Committee's day of general discussion on the right to education (arts. 13 and 14 of the Covenant) and to the World Education Forum (Dakar, April 2000) (see above, chap. V, sect. A, paras. 544-589).

656. The Committee welcomed the UNESCO decision to designate the two members of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations of the UNESCO Executive Board to take part in the UNESCO/Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Joint Expert Group on the monitoring of the right to education, namely Messrs. Klaus Huefner (Germany) and Olabiyi B. J. Yaï (Benin). The Committee designated its Chairperson, Ms. Virginia Bonoan-Dandan (Philippines), and its Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Eibe Riedel (Germany) to represent it at the Joint Expert Group. The first meeting of the Expert Group would be held in 2003.

#### **E. Day of general discussion**

657. At its twenty-eighth session, on 13 May 2002, the Committee held a day of general discussion on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights (art. 3 of the Covenant). The discussion laid foundations for elaboration of a draft general comment on article 3 of the Covenant (see above, chap. V, sect. B, paras. 590-635).

#### **F. General comments**

658. At its 46th and 47th meetings (twenty-ninth session), held on 22 November 2002, the Committee considered, under agenda item 3, a draft general comment on the right to water. In addition to the members of the Committee, representatives of the United Nations specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and individual experts actively participated in the discussion of the draft. General comment no. 15 (2002) on the right to water (arts. 11 and 12 of the Covenant) was then adopted by the Committee at its 51st meeting on 26 November 2002 (see annex IV below).

659. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to those experts who provided comments on the draft general comment both before the session in writing and orally in the course of its discussion. The Committee was particularly grateful to WHO, especially to Dr. Jamie Bartram, for the expert advice offered at all stages of the drafting process, and to Mr. Malcolm Langford, for his untiring assistance throughout the drafting process. The Committee also thanked, for their valuable and long-standing cooperation with the Committee and contribution to the drafting of the general comment, the following States parties, United Nations specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and individual experts: Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations Office at Geneva; WHO; FAO; World Bank; WTO; Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions; American Association for the Advancement of Science; Friedrich Ebert Foundation; FIAN-Foodfirst Information and Action Network; Access to Justice Program (Center for Human Rights and Environment, Argentina); Mr. Jean Ziegler, Special Rapporteur of the

Commission on Human Rights on the right to food; Mr. Miloon Kothari, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on adequate housing; Mr. El Hadji Guissé, Special Rapporteur on the promotion of the realization of the right to drinking water and sanitation of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights; Mr. Yozo Yokota, member of the Sub-Commission; Mr. K. J. Nath, President, Institution of Public Health Engineers (India); Mr. Jack Moss, senior water adviser (Paris); Mr. Rudolf Geiger, member of the Committee on Water Resources of the International Law Association (University of Leipzig, Germany); Mr. Peter Gleick, Director, Pacific Institute, member, International Water Academy (Oslo); and Mr. Henri Smets, member, Académie de l'Eau (Paris).

660. The Committee expressed its gratitude to Mr. Eibe Riedel, who assumed the principal responsibility for drafting and finalizing the text.

661. The Committee decided to accord the highest priority at its thirtieth session to the consideration and adoption of a draft general comment on article 3 of the Covenant (equality between men and women in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights). It reiterated the request to its Chairperson, Ms. Bonoan-Dandan, to have consultations with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and relevant non-governmental organizations with a view to finalizing the draft to be submitted for consideration by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at its forthcoming session. The latter would warmly welcome the adoption of a joint general comment with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and encouraged its Chairperson to pursue the possibility of that joint project.

#### **G. Cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**

662. At its twenty-ninth session, the Committee held discussions with Mr. Miloon Kothari, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on adequate housing; Mr. Jean Ziegler, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on the right to food; and Mr. El Hadji Guissé, the Special Rapporteur on promotion of the realization of the right to drinking water and sanitation of the Sub-Commission. Mr. Hatem Kotrane, independent expert of the Commission to examine the question of an optional protocol to the Covenant, was present at these discussions.

663. The Committee appreciated the opportunity to discuss matters of common concern with the Special Rapporteurs and expressed its willingness to explore ways and means for reinforcing and enhancing cooperation with mandate-holders of the Charter of the United Nations-based bodies dealing with economic, social and cultural rights.

#### **H. Statements adopted by the Committee**

664. The Committee, at its twenty-eighth session in May 2002, adopted a statement to the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Sustainable Development (Bali, Indonesia, 27 May to 7 June

2002) (see annex VI below). At its twenty-ninth session, in November 2002, the Committee, in cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteurs on economic, social and cultural rights, adopted a joint statement entitled, “The Millennium Development Goals and economic, social and cultural rights” (see annex VII below).