

CONGO

CCPR

RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

(Unless otherwise indicated, the reservations and declarations were made upon ratification, accession or succession)

Reservation:

The Government of the People's Republic of Congo declares that it does not consider itself bound by the provisions of article 11 [...]

Article 11 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is quite incompatible with articles 386 et seq. of the Congolese Code of Civil, Commercial, Administrative and Financial Procedure, derived from Act 51-83 of 21 April 1983. Under those provisions, in matters of private law, decisions or orders emanating from conciliation proceedings may be enforced through imprisonment for debt when other means of enforcement have failed, when the amount due exceeds 20,000 CFA francs and when the debtor, between 18 and 60 years of age, makes himself insolvent in bad faith.

OBJECTIONS MADE TO STATE PARTY'S RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

Belgium, 6 November 1984

[The Belgian Government] wishes to observe that the sphere of application of article 11 is particularly restricted. In fact, article 11 prohibits imprisonment only when there is no reason for resorting to it other than the fact that the debtor is unable to fulfil a contractual obligation. Imprisonment is not incompatible with article 11 when there are other reasons for imposing this penalty, for example when the debtor, by acting in bad faith or through fraudulent manoeuvres, has placed himself in the position of being unable to fulfil his obligations. This interpretation of article 11 can be confirmed by reference to the travaux préparatoires (**see document A-2929 of 1 July 1955**).

After studying the explanations provided by the Congo concerning its reservation, [the Belgian Government] has provisionally concluded that this reservation is unnecessary. It is its understanding that the Congolese legislation authorizes imprisonment for debt when other means of enforcement have failed when the amount due exceeds 20,000 CFA francs and when the debtor, between 18 and 60 years of age, makes himself insolvent in bad faith. The latter condition is sufficient to show that there is no contradiction between the Congolese legislation and the letter and the spirit of article 11 of the Covenant.

By virtue of article 4, paragraph 2, of the aforementioned Covenant, article 11 is excluded from the

sphere of application of the rule which states that in the event of an exceptional public emergency, the States Parties to the Covenant may, in certain conditions, take measures derogating from their obligations under the Covenant. Article 11 is one of the articles containing a provision from which no derogation is permitted in any circumstances. Any reservation concerning that article would destroy its effects and would therefore be in contradiction with the letter and the spirit of the Covenant.

Consequently, and without prejudice to its firm belief that Congolese law is in complete conformity with the provisions of article 11 of the Covenant, [the Belgian Government] fears that the reservation made by the Congo may, by reason of its very principle, constitute a precedent which might have considerable effects at the international level.

[The Belgian Government] therefore hopes that this reservation will be withdrawn and, as a precautionary measure, wishes to raise an objection to that reservation.

Netherlands, 6 November 1984

[Same objection as the one made by Belgium] [*Ed. note: see above*]

DECLARATION RE: ARTICLE 41

6 July 1989

Pursuant to article 41 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Congolese Government recognizes, with effect from today's date, the competence of the Human Rights Committee to receive and consider communications to the effect that a State Party claims that another State party is not fulfilling its obligations under the above-mentioned Covenant.