

Recalling further its resolution 2081 (XX) of 20 December 1965 by which it, *inter alia*, decided to hasten the conclusion, among other instruments, of a convention on freedom of information,

Recognizing that freedom of information is indispensable to the enjoyment, promotion and protection of all the other rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Recalling its resolutions concerning racism, nazism, racial discrimination and other similar ideologies,

Recalling also its resolutions and the decisions of other United Nations bodies regarding the dissemination of information on the evils of *apartheid*, racial discrimination and colonialism,

Recalling the deep interest which the United Nations has shown since 1947 in problems of freedom of information and the various measures, thus far inadequate, which it has taken to promote and safeguard this freedom,

Mindful that recent technological advances in the field of telecommunications have, by enormously extending the reach and scope of words, images and ideas, greatly magnified the potentialities, for good or evil, of the media of information,

Recognizing that the existence of monopolies in the media of information is an obstacle to economic and social progress and prevents the full achievement of freedom of information,

Believing that the time has come for the international community to take a renewed interest in measures calculated to promote freedom of information and to encourage the responsible exercise of this freedom,

1. Affirms the principle that the primary function of media of information anywhere in the world is to gather and impart freely and responsibly objective and accurate information;

2. Emphasizes that the objectives of freedom of information could best be attained if everyone had access to diverse sources of news and opinions;

3. Recommends to all States and international organizations concerned that freedom of information should be particularly promoted in the case of dissemination of information on the evils of *apartheid*, racism, nazism, colonialism and racial discrimination;

4. Appeals to the media of information everywhere to co-operate in the strengthening of democratic institutions, the promotion of economic and social progress and friendly relations among nations, and combating propaganda for war or for national, racial or religious hatred, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations;

5. Draws the attention of the United Nations bodies and specialized agencies concerned to the continuing need for assistance in the development and improvement of information media in the developing countries in order to enable the latter to share in the benefits flowing from the modern technological revolution and to redress the inequality in this field between the developed and the developing countries;

6. Commends the existing practice of triennial reporting on freedom of information under the system of periodic reports on human rights and recommends the consideration of the possibility of appointing, as may be necessary, a special rapporteur on freedom of information to conduct an independent and objective study of the actual situation and developments in this field;

7. Decides, pending completion of the draft Convention on Freedom of Information, to give priority to its twenty-fourth session to the consideration and adoption of the draft Declaration on Freedom of Information so that it may serve as an inspiration and set a standard for information media as well as Governments anywhere in the world.

1748th plenary meeting,
19 December 1968.

2449 (XXIII). Legal aid

The General Assembly,

Noting with appreciation resolution XIX on legal aid adopted on 12 May 1968 by the International Conference on Human Rights⁴⁸ held at Teheran from 22 April to 13 May 1968,

Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law,

Recalling further that article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides in part that everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be entitled to defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing and to be informed, if he does not have legal assistance, of this right and to have legal assistance assigned to him in any case where the interests of justice so require, and without payment by him in any such case if he does not have sufficient means to pay for it,

Believing that there are cases where the individual's recourse to competent tribunals to which he has a right of access is denied or hindered because of the lack of financial resources to bear the expenses involved,

Convinced that the provision of legal aid to those who need it would strengthen the observance and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

1. Recommends Member States:

(a) To guarantee the progressive development of comprehensive systems of legal aid to those who need it in order to protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(b) To devise standards for granting, in appropriate cases, legal or professional assistance;

(c) To consider ways and means of defraying the expenses involved in providing such comprehensive legal aid systems;

(d) To consider taking all possible steps to simplify legal procedures so as to reduce the burdens on the financial and other resources of individuals who seek legal redress;

(e) To encourage co-operation among appropriate bodies making available competent legal assistance to those who need it;

2. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the appropriate United Nations organs, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organs concerned, to provide the necessary resources, within the limits of the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, to facilitate expert and other technical assistance to Member States seeking to extend the availability of competent legal aid.

1748th plenary meeting,
19 December 1968.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.