



# General Assembly

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**Fifty-eighth session**  
Agenda item 117 (b)

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 22 December 2003

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/58/508/Add.2)]

### **58/183. Human rights in the administration of justice**

*The General Assembly,*

*Bearing in mind* the principles embodied in articles 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and the relevant provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols thereto,<sup>2</sup> in particular article 6 of the Covenant, which states, inter alia, that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life and prohibits the imposition of the death penalty for crimes committed by persons below 18 years of age, and article 10, which provides that all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person,

*Bearing in mind also* the relevant provisions of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,<sup>3</sup> the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,<sup>4</sup> in particular the right to equal treatment before tribunals and all other organs administering justice, the Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>5</sup> in particular article 37, according to which every child deprived of liberty shall be treated in a manner that takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>6</sup> in particular the obligation to treat men and women equally in all stages of procedures in courts and tribunals,

*Calling attention* to the numerous international standards in the field of the administration of justice,

*Convinced* that the independence and impartiality of the judiciary are essential prerequisites for the protection of human rights and for ensuring that there is no discrimination in the administration of justice and should therefore be respected in all circumstances,

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>2</sup> See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex, and resolution 44/128, annex.

<sup>3</sup> Resolution 39/46, annex.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution 2106 A (XX), annex.

<sup>5</sup> Resolution 44/25, annex.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution 34/180, annex.

*Emphasizing* that the right to access to justice, as contained in applicable international human rights instruments, forms an important basis for strengthening the rule of law through the administration of justice,

*Mindful* of the importance of ensuring respect for the rule of law and human rights in the administration of justice, in particular in post-conflict situations, as a crucial contribution to building peace and justice and ending impunity,

*Recalling* the Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System<sup>7</sup> and the establishment and subsequent meetings of the coordination panel on technical advice and assistance in juvenile justice,

*Calling attention* to the relevant provisions of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century,<sup>8</sup> and of the plans of action for its implementation and follow-up,<sup>9</sup>

*Recalling* its resolution 56/161 of 19 December 2001, as well as Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/47 of 23 April 2002<sup>10</sup> and Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/30 of 22 July 2003, entitled “United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice”,

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of the full and effective implementation of all United Nations standards on human rights in the administration of justice;

2. *Reiterates its call* to all Member States to spare no effort in providing for effective legislative and other mechanisms and procedures, as well as adequate resources, to ensure the full implementation of those standards;

3. *Affirms* that States must ensure that any measure taken to combat terrorism, including in the administration of justice, complies with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law;

4. *Invites* Governments to provide training, including anti-racist, multicultural and gender-sensitive training, in human rights in the administration of justice, including juvenile justice, to all judges, lawyers, prosecutors, social workers, immigration and police officers and other professionals concerned, including personnel deployed in international field presences;

5. *Invites* States to make use of technical assistance offered by the relevant United Nations programmes in order to strengthen national capacities and infrastructures in the field of the administration of justice;

6. *Appeals* to Governments to include in their national development plans the administration of justice as an integral part of the development process and to allocate adequate resources for the provision of legal-aid services with a view to promoting and protecting human rights, and invites the international community to respond favourably to requests for financial and technical assistance for the enhancement and strengthening of the administration of justice;

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<sup>7</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/30, annex.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution 55/59, annex.

<sup>9</sup> Resolution 56/261, annex.

<sup>10</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 3 (E/2002/23)*, chap. II, sect. A.

7. *Encourages* the regional commissions, the specialized agencies, United Nations institutes active in the areas of human rights and crime prevention and criminal justice, and other relevant parts of the United Nations system, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including national professional associations concerned with promoting United Nations standards in this field, and other segments of civil society, including the media, to continue to develop their activities in promoting human rights in the administration of justice;

8. *Takes note with interest* of the debates held in the Security Council on the agenda item entitled “Justice and the Rule of Law: the United Nations role”;

9. *Invites* the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Crime Programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to closely coordinate their activities relating to the administration of justice;

10. *Calls upon* mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary bodies, including special rapporteurs, special representatives and working groups, to continue to give special attention to questions relating to the effective promotion and protection of human rights in the administration of justice, including juvenile justice, and to provide, where appropriate, specific recommendations in this regard, including proposals for advisory services and technical assistance measures;

11. *Calls upon* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to reinforce, within his mandate, his activities relating to national capacity-building in the field of the administration of justice, in particular in post-conflict situations;

12. *Encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue organizing training courses and other relevant activities aimed at enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights in the field of the administration of justice, and welcomes the publication of the Manual on Human Rights for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers within the framework of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995–2004;

13. *Welcomes* the increased attention paid to the issue of juvenile justice by the High Commissioner and the United Nations Children’s Fund, in particular through technical assistance activities, and, taking into account the fact that international cooperation to promote juvenile justice reform has become a priority within the United Nations system, encourages the further activities of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Children’s Fund, within their mandates, in this regard;

14. *Calls upon* the coordination panel on technical advice and assistance in juvenile justice to further increase cooperation among the partners involved, to share information and to pool their capacities and interests in order to increase the effectiveness of programme implementation;

15. *Invites* Governments, relevant international and regional bodies, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations to devote increased attention to the issue of women in prison, including the children of women in prison, with a view to identifying the key problems and ways in which they can be

addressed, and notes the proposal of the Subcommittee on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to prepare a working paper on this question;<sup>11</sup>

16. *Underlines* the importance of rebuilding and strengthening structures for the administration of justice and respect for the rule of law and human rights in post-conflict situations, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure system-wide coordination and coherence of programmes and activities of the relevant parts of the United Nations system in the field of the administration of justice in post-conflict situations, including assistance provided through United Nations field presences;

17. *Stresses* the special need for national capacity-building in the field of the administration of justice, in particular through reform of the judiciary, the police and the penal system, as well as juvenile justice reform, in order to establish and maintain stable societies and the rule of law in post-conflict situations, and in this context welcomes the role of the Office of the High Commissioner in supporting the establishment and functioning of transitional justice mechanisms in post-conflict situations;

18. *Decides* to consider the question of human rights in the administration of justice at its sixtieth session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

*77th plenary meeting  
22 December 2003*

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<sup>11</sup> See E/CN.4/2004/2-E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/43, chap. II, sect. B, decision 2003/104.