Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 962 (1983)[1]

Development co-operation and human rights

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to its Resolution 726 (1980) on a strategy for the 3rd United Nations Development Decade and to its Resolution 747 (1981) on global prospects- human needs and the earth's resources ; and having taken note of the report on development co-operation and human rights presented by its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development (Doc. 4997) ;

2. Convinced that human rights have become a major matter of concern in international relations, that any development co-operation policy must take the human rights situation into consideration, and that, for ethical reasons, the human being must be actively, not passively, involved in development and in any related policy decisions ;

3. Considering that the principle of noninterference in the domestic affairs of other states should not apply whenever human rights are at stake ;

4. Emphasising that the progress of human rights in the Third World will depend primarily on domestic factors, but that it will also depend on external factors such as the influence exerted by the international community and development co-operation, which can help to create conditions facilitating or hindering the flourishing of human rights ;

5. Considering that, since it is one of the statutory objectives of the Council of Europe to further the realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, its member states should take the human rights situation in the Third World fully into account when shaping their development co-operation policies ;

6. Considering that, in accordance with the preamble to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Council of Europe member states have reaffirmed their profound belief in those fundamental freedoms which are the foundation of justice and peace in the world ;

7. Convinced that the political system most appropriate for the effective protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms is a pluralistic democracy which upholds the rule of law, the principle of majority rule, the adequate protection of the rights of minorities and the apportionment of resources so as to ensure social justice and equality of opportunity for all ;

8. Believing that civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other are universal, and that there are no grounds for establishing priorities between basic human needs and basic human rights (bread versus freedom) ;

9. Considering that neither underdevelopment nor the development process justifies violations of human rights, and rejecting the idea that satisfactory material welfare by itself engenders respect for human rights ;

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1. Assembly debate on 26 January 1983 (24th Sitting) (see Doc. 4997, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, and Doc. 5009, Opinion of the Legal Affairs Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 January 1983 (24th Sitting).

10. Supporting the Declaration on Human Rights adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 April 1978, and expressing the hope that work undertaken with a view to including economic, social and cultural rights in a Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms will soon lead to positive results ;

11. Considering that the aims of development should be survival, the satisfaction of basic human needs and the protection of human rights ;

12. Observing that fresh international endeavours are necessary, not least in order to guarantee the right to development, which implies that in all nations every individual shall enjoy all human rights, that it is the duty of all governments to further the development of their countries and of society, and that the international community and such states as are in a position to assist this evolution are morally bound to do so ;

13. Expressing its concern at the recent worsening of the economic and financial situation of many developing countries ;

14. Deploring that official development aid from the industrialised countries as a whole has remained well below the target of 0.7% of GNP set by the United Nations and the report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues (Brandt Commission) ;

15. Recalling in this respect its Resolution 747 (1981), on global prospects- human needs and the earth's resources ;

16. Convinced that lasting peace and a limitation, or preferably reduction, of military expenditure would be decisive factors for development,

17. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe invite the governments of member states :

17.1. to make it the primary objective of their co-operation and official development aid policies to contribute not only to the satisfaction of basic needs (food, employment, drinking-water, health, clothing, housing and education), but also towards progress in the protection of civil and political rights ;

17.2. to endeavour, if they have not yet done so, and in spite of the economic and financial constraints there may be, to achieve the target of 0.7% of GNP for official development aid and introduce new financial instruments, such as the subsidisation of interest rates ; bearing in mind that such aid will contribute to a substantial improvement of the global economic situation and a development of trade between the developed and developing countries ;

17.3. to make an additional official development aid effort in favour of those countries which carry out internal reforms, establish pluralistic democratic structures, and try to promote economic and social progress, social justice and the implementation of human rights ;

17.4. to initiate consultations within the Council of Europe and OECD with a view to a special programme of financial assistance being carried out for the few countries with low or intermediate incomes which are genuine democracies and are having to contend with extremely difficult economic conditions prejudicing social and political stability as well as democracy ;

17.5. to channel official development aid towards the most disadvantaged sections of the population, by supporting priority sectors such as basic education and vocational training, rural development, the fight against hunger, the creation of jobs and the promotion of appropriate technologies, as well as certain forms of co-operation such as mutual aid organisations and co-operatives ;

17.6. to support the creation of democratic institutions and the achievement of human rights, with a view to establishing a bond of solidarity between democratic nations ;

17.7. in regard to states where relations between the rulers and their subjects are marked by arbitrary measures, intimidation and physical repression, and where civil and political freedoms are trampled under foot :

a. to confine their action to those development projects that are directly beneficial to the afflicted populations, having recourse where appropriate to non-governmental organisations such as religious bodies and trade unions which are more directly in touch with the victims of human rights violations ;

b. to bring strong diplomatic pressure to bear, and if necessary, reduce or cancel official development aid programmes while fully maintaining purely humanitarian assistance, in particular by having recourse to non-governmental organisations ;

17.8. to take into consideration, when shaping their bilateral and multilateral development assistance policies, the human rights situation in the countries concerned as well as the possible impact of the proposed projects on the evolution of this situation ;

17.9. to implement forms of North-South co-operation more conducive to economic and social progress of the kind required in the developing countries for giving human rights a firmer basis ;

17.10. to encourage the preparation and application of human rights instruments at regional level, such as the efforts being undertaken in this respect in Latin America and Africa ;

17.11. to urge all countries that have not already done so to ratify and apply the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to submit to the control-machinery set up by these covenants, whose effectiveness should be reinforced ;

17.12. to submit to it for an opinion the draft for a new protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights which aims at including in the convention a number of fundamental rights listed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and not covered by the European convention ;

17.13. to encourage the adoption of efficient procedures for supervising the application of existing instruments for the protection of human rights, and to provide the competent organs of the United Nations with the necessary staff, equipment and financial resources ;

17.14. to promote the institution of a United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ;

17.15. on the basis of this recommendation, in particular in the framework of the Council of Europe, the crossroads of the democracies, to agree to adopt joint attitudes on all questions towards regimes which flout human rights ;

17.16. to increase their contributions to the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg (Institut René Cassin) and to other organisations which provide information and assistance for the promotion of human rights and support for all efforts undertaken in the Third World with a view to promoting respect for human rights and democracy ;

18. Calls on its members to urge the adoption of the policies recommended in the foregoing paragraphs in their national parliaments.