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THIRD COMMITTEE
Agenda item 28

DRAFT INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Report of the Working Party on Article 1

1. At the 655th meeting on 7 November 1955, the Third Committee decided:

"To appoint a working party, composed of representatives of nine countries designated by the Chairman of the Committee, to consider Article 1 of the draft International Covenants on Human Rights, in the light of the amendments proposed and of the comments and suggestions made, and to submit a text to the Committee not later than 19 November 1955, so that the Committee may continue its discussion and adopt, in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly, an article on the right of peoples and nations to self-determination in the draft International Covenants on Human Rights at the present session."
2. In accordance with this decision, the Chairman of the Third Committee, at the 656th meeting on 8 November 1955, announced the appointment of Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Greece, India, Pakistan, Poland, Syria and Venezuela to serve on the Working Party.
3. The first meeting of the Working Party was opened on 9 November 1955 by the Vice-Chairman of the Third Committee. At this meeting, the Working Party by acclamation elected Mr. Miguel Rafael Urquía (El Salvador) as its Chairman, and Mrs. Lina Tsaldaris (Greece) as its Rapporteur. The Working Party held six meetings on 9, 10, 11, 14, 15 and 16 November 1955.
4. Besides the text of Article 1 drafted by the Commission on Human Rights, the Working Party had before it the amendments proposed and comments and suggestions made in the Third Committee (A/C.3/L.460, 475, 476, 480, 480/Rev.1; A/C.3/SR.641-655). Furthermore, upon the request of the Working Party, suggestions and observations were presented, orally or in writing, by the representatives of Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, and of Denmark and Sweden.

5. After a brief general discussion, the Working Party proceeded to discuss the article paragraph by paragraph. It adopted by 7 votes to none, with 2 abstentions the following text of Article 1 for the consideration of the Third Committee:

1. All peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of this right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

2. The peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

3. The States parties to the Covenant having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination in such Territories in conformity with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

6. The Working Party agreed unanimously to include the following passage in this report:

"The representatives of the countries which composed the Working Party appointed by the Third Committee to consider article 1 of the draft international covenants on human rights and to submit a text to the Committee requesting the Rapporteur to state in her report that, in the discharge of the task with which they were honoured, they endeavoured to reconcile, as far as it was possible, the different points of view; but in any case they reserve the right of their delegations to defend their several points of view in the Committee and in the Assembly."
