

## 1745 (LIV). Capital punishment

### *The Economic and Social Council,*

*Recalling* article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms everyone's right to life,

*Recalling* its resolutions 934 (XXXV) of 9 April 1963, 1574 (L) of 20 May 1971 and 1656 (LII) of 1 June 1972, and General Assembly resolutions 1396 (XIV) of 20 November 1959, 2393 (XXIII) of 26 November 1968, 2857 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971 and 3011 (XXVII) of 18 December 1972 indicating the continuing interest of the United Nations in the study of the question of capital punishment and its desire to promote full respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also in this field,

*Having considered* the third report of the Secretary-General on capital punishment,<sup>13</sup>

*Noting with satisfaction* that a large number of Member States recently provided the Secretary-General with the information requested in General Assembly resolution 2393 (XXIII),<sup>14</sup>

*Noting* however that, notwithstanding the information now available, it is difficult to establish a full picture of the present situation, trends and safeguards concerning capital punishment,

*Believing* that scientifically based studies are needed to improve the present knowledge and understanding of the death penalty and to define what further work could be done by the United Nations in this field, including studies embracing: redefinition of criminal offences to which the death penalty is applied; restriction of the variety and form of such offences to which the death penalty is applied; promotion of studies undertaken on a transregional basis taking into account groups of countries with similar legal, social and economic systems, and similar levels of economic and social development; promotion of individual country studies to determine the economic, social and educational levels of persons executed and of those convicted but not executed in retentionist States over the last two decades,

1. *Reaffirms* that the main objective to be pursued is that of progressively restricting the number of offences for which capital punishment might be imposed with a view to the desirability of abolishing this punishment;

2. *Notes with satisfaction* that, since the publication of the second report of the Secretary-General,<sup>15</sup> capital punishment has been abolished in six countries;

3. *Considers* as further positive signs towards the abolition of capital punishment the fact that, in countries where it still exists, it is generally considered as an exceptional measure which in most cases has not been applied for a long time, and the progressive restriction in those countries of ordinary offences for which it is or may be imposed;

4. *Expresses its deep concern* at the introduction on occasion of harsher methods of execution involving for example, torture or beating, no matter where or under what circumstances these may have occurred;

5. *Invites* the Secretary-General to submit to the Economic and Social Council periodic updated and

<sup>13</sup> E/5242 and Add.1.

<sup>14</sup> See ST/SOA/118 and Add.1 and 2.

<sup>15</sup> See *Capital Punishment* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.67.IV.15), part II: "Developments, 1961 to 1965".

analytical reports at five-year intervals starting from 1975;

6. *Invites* Member States, so that the future five-year reports may be based on all information available:

(a) To include in their periodic reports submitted under Economic and Social Council resolution 1074 C (XXXIX) of 28 July 1965 any further change in the present situation in regard to capital punishment and safeguards thereto;

(b) To inform the Secretary-General of any new research carried out by qualified national institutions and of any governmental action undertaken to promote research in this field;

7. *Invites* the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, availing itself also of the services of the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute, and of the regional social defence institutes, to examine the third report of the Secretary-General and to submit to the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-eighth session comments and recommendations, through the relevant functional commissions, to stimulate at the international and national levels a better understanding of the issues presently involved in the question of capital punishment.

*1855th plenary meeting  
16 May 1973*

## 1656 (LII). Capital punishment

### *The Economic and Social Council,*

*Recalling* its resolution 1574 (L) of 20 May 1971 and General Assembly resolutions 2393 (XXIII) of 26 November 1968 and 2857 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971,

*Having considered* the additional information<sup>2</sup> provided by some Member States on the legal procedures and safeguards applied in capital cases and on their attitude to possible further restriction of the use of the death penalty or its total abolition,

*Requests* the Secretary-General to invite those Member States which have not yet provided the information requested in General Assembly resolutions 2393 (XXIII) and 2857 (XXVI) to do so as soon as possible so that he can submit to the Council at its fifty-fourth session the available information on the subject.

*1816th plenary meeting  
1 June 1972*

<sup>2</sup> See E/5108.