



Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos

Asociación Civil

ONG con status consultivo II ante el ECOSOC de Naciones Unidas

Av. Callao 569, 3º Cpo., 1er P. [1022] Buenos Aires, Argentina

Tel. 374-4382 / 476-2061 / 373-0397 / 6073 • Fax (0541) 814-3714

ITEM 10: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Mr. Chairperson,

The Permanent Assembly for Human Rights considers a priority to pay special attention to the defense and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights. The increase of the levels of poverty around the world, and in Latin America in particular, gives evidence of the huge delay that takes place with regards to the respect of human rights and of the urgent need to move towards the total enforcement and justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights, which next to civil and political rights conform an integral and indivisible body.

The United Nations Development Program has informed that 800 million people around the world are victims of hunger and close to 500 million people suffer from chronic malnutrition. The concentration of wealth is such that wealth belonging to the 358 richest persons in the planet is bigger than the annual incomes of the poorest 45% altogether. On the other hand, in Latin America, and according to the Interamerican Development Bank, 44% of the population is poor and 40% of indigents live with less than one dollar per day. Poverty is widely spread and diversified and, what is worst, continues to grow. Economic and social inequalities are more notorious everyday and a parallel social degradation process is taken place where the deterioration of the economic basis of middle classes are leading them to live under the poverty line as well. A report from the Economic Commission for Latin America affirms that this is the most unequal region of the world. It is precisely the combination of the increase of the inequality gap and the fall in the income of the poorest layers what leads to an increase of the levels of indigence. If things continue to be like this, most Latin-American countries will not be able to fulfill the millenium goals which involve, among other things, the commitment to reduce poverty to half by 2015.

The reduction of the public sector, the minimization of social policies, the relaxation of markets (including the labor one) and the centralization of national economies in the financial sector in detriment of a productive development which would generate employment, are samples of the decisions taken at the highest public stages which have caused the increase of unemployment and economic concentration as well as the deepening of poverty and social exclusion. Also, it is important to consider the effect of the external debt in the satisfaction of the economic, social and cultural rights of Latin American citizens. To respond to the commitments generated by foreign debt this countries lost the capability to handle the necessary resources to satisfy the basic necessities of its population and to promote economic and social development.

The state and provincial institutions, the international financial institutions, the multilateral organizations, the local economic groups and mass media, have made

economy to become the value that defines and precedes justice, corroding the same bases of humanity. A deep reflection is required to investigate the roles and responsibilities of the institutions that favored the violation of economic, social and cultural rights. The governmental actions which generated this deep social emergency can not remain unpunished. Economic, social and cultural rights are enforceable and justiciable and it is necessary to establish proper judicial procedures to try and condemn those who violated them.

It is for these reasons that the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights considers essential the adoption of an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which would provide an individual complaints mechanism and establish not only negative obligations to the States but also positive ones so as to respect, protect, fulfill, facilitate and ensure these rights, in order to make effective the principles gathered in the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna where it was proclaimed the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights.

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Permanent Assembly for Human Rights (APDH)
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