

Note on the 37th session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 6-24 November 2006, and its Pre-Sessional Working Group, 27 November-1 December 2006

1. The Committee considered and adopted concluding observations on the following States parties' reports: The initial reports of **Albania** (E/C.12/ALB/CO/1), **The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** (E/C.12/MKD/CO/1) and **Tajikistan** (E/C.12/TJK/CO/1); the second periodic report of **El Salvador** (E/C.12/SLV/CO/2); and the third periodic report of **The Netherlands** (E/C.12/NLD/CO/3).

2. At its 51st meeting, on 20 November 2006, the Committee, under agenda item 5 (Substantive issues arising in the implementation of the Covenant), began its first reading of a **draft general comment on article 9 of the Covenant (the right to social security)**. Also on 20 November 2006, at its 52nd meeting, the Committee continued its consideration of a **draft general comment on article 2.2 of the Covenant (non-discrimination)**. At this session, the Committee decided that the next subject of a general comment would be article 15 (1)(a) of the Covenant, which provides for the right to take part in cultural life.

3. On 17 and 18 November 2006, the **Joint Expert Group UNESCO (CR)/ ECOSOC (CESCR)** on the monitoring of the right to education (JEG) held its fifth meeting in Paris to discuss the right to compulsory primary education available free to all (article 13 (2) (a) of the Covenant). The JEG discussed and clarified the meaning and scope of the different elements of the right, including the length of primary education as compared to that of "basic education", the quality of primary education, its compulsory nature and the obligation of its provision without charge.

4. On 24 and 25 November 2006, Committee members participated in a colloquium organized by the International Labour Organization, in honor of the 80th anniversary of the **ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations**, at which experts reviewed the progress made in "Protecting Labour Rights as Human Rights: Present and Future of International Supervision".

5. The Committee decided to convene its **next meeting with States parties** during its 38th session in May 2007.

6. The Committee scheduled for consideration at its 38th session, to be held in Geneva (Palais Wilson) from 30 April to 18 May 2007, the following States parties' reports: the initial report of **Latvia** (E/1990/5/Add.70); the second periodic report of **Nepal** (E/C.12/NPL/2); the third periodic reports of **Hungary** (E/C.12/HUN/3) and the **Netherlands Antilles** (E/C.12/ANT/3); and the fifth periodic report of **Finland** (E/C.12/FIN/5).

7. On 27 and 28 November 2006, the Committee held an **informal consultation on the impact of international trade on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights** with a number of experts on the subject matter representing different UN bodies, inter- and non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. The consultation covered the following themes: the WTO, regional trading systems and bilateral trade agreements; the possible impact of international trade rules and policies

on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights; the impact of trade-related intellectual property rights on access to affordable medicines; international trade and core labour rights; and agricultural trade and the right to food.

8. The **Pre-Sessional Working Group** of the Committee met from 27 November to 1 December 2006 and adopted lists of issues with respect to the following States parties' reports: The second periodic report of **Nepal** (E/C.12/NEP/2; E/C.12/NPL/Q/2); the third periodic report of **Belgium** (E/C.12/BLG/3; E/C.12/BLG/Q/3); the second to fourth periodic reports of **Costa Rica** (E/C.12/CRI/4; E/C.12/CRI/Q/4); and the fifth periodic report of **Ukraine** (E/C.12/UKR/5; E/C.12/UKR/Q/5).

9. The following members of the Committee were designated by the Chairperson to serve as members of the Committee's **next Pre-Sessional Working Group**, which will meet from 21 to 25 May 2007: Mr. Atangana, Ms. Bonoan-Dandan, Ms. Bras Gomes, Mr. Kerdoun and Mr. Tirado Mejia. The reports to be examined by the Working Group, on which lists of issues will be adopted, are as follows: the third periodic report of **France**, the combined initial, second and third periodic reports of **Paraguay**, the combined second to fifth periodic reports of **India**, the fourth periodic report of **Chile**, and the initial report of **San Marino**.
