

## Summary of the INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

### **Preamble:**

The States Parties to (Governments that ratify) the present Covenant,  
Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person,

Recognizing that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights,

Considering the obligation of States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms,

Realizing that the individual, having duties to other individuals and to the community to which he belongs, is under a responsibility to strive for the promotion and observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant,

### ***Agree upon the following articles (summarized):***

**Article 1.** All peoples have the right to self determination: to freely determine their political status (form of governance), choose their economic, social and cultural development and use their natural wealth and resources for themselves, based on the principle of mutual benefit. In no case may a people (nation) be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

**Article 2.** Each government commits itself to work towards ensuring the rights of this Covenant, using maximum available resources, and through creating new laws. Each government also commits itself to guarantee that these rights are achieved for all persons without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

**Article 3.** Women and men have equal right to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights as listed in this Covenant.

**Article 4.** Countries may set limits to these rights only to promote the general well-being of society and to ensure that the rights of this Covenant are achieved.

**Article 5.** Nothing in this Covenant is meant to reduce any of the rights and freedoms listed in it, or any rights and freedoms already accepted or existing in any country signed to this Covenant.

**Article 6.** Everyone has the right to work, including the right to freely choose or accept work.

- Article 7.** Everyone has the right to fair working conditions including:
- fair wages and equal pay for work of equal value
  - wages which provide a decent living for themselves and their family
  - safe and healthy working conditions
  - equal opportunity for promotion and time for rest, with holidays with pay.
- Article 8.** Everyone has the right to form unions and join the union of their choice, and everyone has the right to strike.
- Article 9.** Everyone has the right to social security, including social assistance
- Article 10.** The family unit should be protected and provided with assistance, especially while raising children.  
Particular consideration should be given to the following areas:
- mothers before and after childbirth
  - working mothers should get paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits
  - children should be protected from economic and social exploitation and child labour should be illegal
- Article 11.** Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living including adequate food, clothing and housing, and the on-going improvement of living conditions, especially the right to freedom from hunger.
- Article 12.** Everyone has the right to the highest possible standard of physical and mental health.  
Particular consideration should be given to the following areas:
- reduction of stillbirth and infant mortality rates and the promotion of healthy child development
  - improvement of environmental and industrial hygiene
  - prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, occupational and other diseases and the provision of equal medical attention to everyone in the event of sickness.
- Article 13.** Everyone has the right to education. Primary, secondary and higher education should be available and accessible to all, especially through the introduction of free education.
- Article 14.** The government of each country signed to this Covenant must make a plan of action for primary education, completely free, if not already in place.
- Article 15.** Everyone has the right to take part in cultural life and to enjoy the benefits of scientific improvements and commonly used technology.
- Article 16 - 27** Describes the administration of the Covenant.
- Article 28** All rights and responsibilities in this Covenant apply to all levels of government of each country signed to this Covenant.