

Thirteenth session (1981)

General comment No. 1: Reporting obligation

[General comment No. 1 has been replaced by general comment No. 30]

States parties have undertaken to submit reports in accordance with article 40 of the Covenant within one year of its entry into force for the States parties concerned and, thereafter, whenever the Committee so requests. Until the present time only the first part of this provision, calling for initial reports, has become regularly operative. The Committee notes, as appears from its annual reports, that only a small number of States have submitted their reports on time. Most of them have been submitted with delays ranging from a few months to several years and some States parties are still in default despite repeated reminders and other actions by the Committee. The fact that most States parties have nevertheless, even if somewhat late, engaged in a constructive dialogue with the Committee suggests that the States parties normally ought to be able to fulfil the reporting obligation within the time limit prescribed by article 40 (1) and that it would be in their own interest to do so in the future. In the process of ratifying the Covenant, States should pay immediate attention to their reporting obligation since the proper preparation of a report which covers so many civil and political rights necessarily does require time.