

The Right to be Heard and Protected by Law (The Right of Petition)

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The 12th Triennial Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 4-8 August 1953 in Paris, France:

The XII International Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom meeting in Paris, August 4-8th, 1953,

Deeply regrets that the provisions of Article 52 of the Draft Covenant of Human Rights, as recommended by the recent Ninth Session of the Commission on Human Rights, restrict to States Parties the right to bring matters concerning the violation of Human Rights to the attention of another State and, after six months, to the 'Committee' on Human Rights and,

Urges the coming Eighth General Assembly of the United Nations to protect those whose rights are violated by providing a new article entitling the Human Rights "Committee" (to be set up) to receive and consider also Communications from individuals and Non-Governmental Organizations and to initiate itself proceedings in cases serious enough to justify international action by the United Nations.

While fully recognising that the sovereignty of National Governments is a reality, this Congress, equally aware of the fact that recourse to national authorities may in many cases be exhausted or even impossible, holds that the discrepancy between the reality of national sovereignty on the one hand and the cruel reality of facts faced by the many legally unprotected, on the other hand, make the right to petition from individuals and private organisations the more imperative.

It is the most earnest desire of this Congress to see the confidence of the peoples of the world in the work of the United Nations restored by the explicit recognition through the General Assembly of the equal and inalienable right of ALL members of the human family to be heard and protected by the rule of law- regardless of their nationality or residence.