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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Second periodic reports submitted by States parties to the
Covenant, in accordance with Council resolution 1988 (LX),
concerning rights covered by articles 6-9

BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC*

[28 November 1983]

1. The initial report of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic on articles 6 to 9 was submitted to the United Nations Secretariat on 9 June 1978 (E/1978/8/Add.19).

2. As stated in the previous report, on 14 April 1978 the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR adopted the new Constitution, which laid the legislative basis for enhancing Soviet democracy and enriching its forms and methods. The process of perfecting developed socialism that is occurring in the country implies the further expansion of productive forces and the development and consolidation of collective social relations, the Soviet State and democracy, socialist awareness, science and culture. In a society marked by developed socialism, there occurs an objective process in which all classes and social groups are brought closer together, and practice and law are developed with a view to enhancing social homogeneity and eliminating the essential distinctions between town and country and between workers engaged in intellectual and physical labour.

* The initial report concerning rights covered by articles 6-9 of the Covenant submitted by the Government of the Byelorussian SSR (E/1978/8/Add.19) was considered by the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts at its 1980 session (see E/1980/WG.1/SR.16).

3. The supreme goal of socialist production is a steady rise in the standard of living of the people and the creation of conditions for the all-round development of the personality. Of particular importance for the achievement of this goal are measures to increase the efficiency of social production, to accelerate scientific and technological progress and reduce the proportion of manual labour, to save and make rational use of all forms of resources, and to increase the return from capital investment.

4. In the period since the initial report was submitted, the Republic has continued to experience a further development of socialist democracy, which has been enriched by new forms and methods, and a broadening of the rights and opportunities of production workers in all aspects of the social and political life of society.

5. Thus, on 17 June 1983, at the eighth session of the tenth convocation, the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics adopted the Law on Work Collectives and the enhancement of their role in the management of enterprises, institutions and organizations, which entered into force on 1 August 1983. This Law on Work Collectives is a document of major political, economic and social significance. It embodies the Leninist ideas on the ever-wider consolidation of collectivism in the social practice of the socialist system, reflects the consistent policy of further improving socialist democracy and contains the practical application of the provisions of the Constitutions (fundamental laws) of the USSR and the Byelorussian SSR on the role, tasks and rights of work collectives, prepared on the basis of suggestions made by workers during the nation-wide discussion of the draft of this law. In the Byelorussian SSR, more than 3.8 million manual, non-manual and agricultural workers took part in the discussion.

6. The new law, which extends the powers and possibilities of the work collectives in discussing and deciding public and State affairs and in the management of enterprises, is based on the principles of socialist society - a society of free labour and social justice. Work collectives are given wide powers in discussing and deciding State and public affairs. They consider draft laws, decisions of the local Soviets of People's Deputies affecting the interests of the work collective and other questions of State and public life raised for discussion, and make suggestions concerning them; they nominate candidates as deputies to the Soviets of People's Deputies and representatives on the electoral commissions; they receive reports from the deputies to the Soviets of People's Deputies nominated by the work collective, together with reports from the executive committees of the local Soviets of People's Deputies and their boards and departments; they nominate candidates as people's judges; they elect people's assessors of district (city) people's courts, who report back to them; they raise the question of recalling deputies to the Soviets of People's Deputies, people's judges and assessors who have not justified the confidence of the electors; and they elect standing work conferences, people's control committees, groups and posts, comrades' courts and other public bodies operating in work collectives, all of which report back to them.

ARTICLE 6. THE RIGHT TO WORK

1. The report previously submitted described in detail the implementation in the Byelorussian SSR of the policy of satisfying the need for work of all able-bodied members of the population, a policy which has led to the achievement of genuine full employment. Unemployment was eliminated in the Byelorussian SSR in the early 1930s. Since the positive experience of achieving full employment might be of wide interest, the following additional information is provided.

2. During the period under review, the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR approved the State plan for the economic and social development of the Byelorussian SSR for the eleventh five-year plan (1981-1985), the main aim of which is to ensure further enhancement of the workers' well-being through steady and progressive development of the economy, acceleration of scientific and technical progress, movement of the economy to an intensive stage of development, more rational utilization of the productive potential of the country, and all-round efforts to save material resources and improve the quality of work.

3. From the point of view of employment policy, it is of fundamental importance that the plan provides for steady rates of economic growth, progressive advances in the structure of the economy, targets for raising labour productivity, measures to improve the proportionality and balance of sectors of the economy, and measures to improve the management and planning system and to institute advance forms of labour and production organization.

4. The plan also takes into account the fact that the change in the demographic situation and the transition of the economy to the intensive stage of development makes improving the utilization of labour resources one of the main tasks of the eleventh five-year plan. The State plan for the economic and social development of the Byelorussian SSR and the sectoral and regional plans formulated on its basis invariably contain indications of the labour requirements in the main occupations and areas of employment, together with appropriate indicators concerning the training of the necessary staff.

5. An integral part of these plans is the table of labour resources, which indicates the existing labour force in a given region from the point of view of occupational groups and level of training, as well as of demographic, social and cultural characteristics (age, sex, level of education, present work and aptitudes, level of employment of women in social production, preference for living in a rural or an urban area etc.). The table also shows the possibilities and prospects of economic development in a particular territory and the number and occupational nature of newly established posts.

6. The need for additional labour resources identified as a result of those calculations forms the basis for the preparation of plans for the basic and advanced training of personnel. The growth of material production and the service sector and the distribution of productive forces are taken into account in identifying overall and additional labour requirements and the numbers of students entering, attending and leaving vocational-technical schools and higher and specialized secondary educational establishments.

7. Managing the process of training and evaluating personnel is seen in the Byelorussian SSR as an important part of economic and social development. The State Planning Committee, the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education, the State Committee for Vocational and Technical Education, the State Labour Committee and other ministries and agencies take part in planning and carrying out those activities. The public organizations, particularly the trade unions, participate in those activities at all levels.

8. More than 10 years ago the Byelorussian SSR completed the transition to universal secondary education; the younger generation starts out with a broad general education, which gives it a greater chance of successfully mastering any trade or profession and acquiring knowledge.

9. The process of imparting a general education in the Byelorussian SSR is combined with that of educating the students for work, providing vocational guidance and enabling them to acquire work skills. This is done to enable students to make a more informed choice of their future trade or profession. Students in grades 9 and 10 receive job training in enterprises and organizations, on State and collective farms, and in school workshops, laboratories and special-purpose classrooms.

10. The decision of 21 June 1979 adopted by the Council of Ministers of the USSR on measures for further improving the basic and advanced training of production workers provides for an extensive range of measures to improve and integrate the system of vocational training and perfection of job skills of production personnel. The purpose of this decision and a number of other measures is to ensure consistent implementation of a united State policy aimed at enhancing the level of education and skills of workers in keeping with the requirements of technical progress and the activities of a developed socialist society and at ensuring the balanced and rounded development of the personality.

11. Article 13 of the new Law on Work Collectives of the USSR confirms the right of work collectives to take part in discussing and deciding matters pertaining to the training, placement and rational utilization of staff, maintenance of the stability of collectives and improvement of the structure of enterprises, institutions and organizations. Work collectives recommend members of the collective who have distinguished themselves at work for movement to a higher category (grade) or for promotion; they consider matters relating to staff training, instruction in new trades, the development of tutoring systems and the work of schools that teach advanced work methods. Work collectives also consider questions relating to the education and vocational training of young workers and their incorporation in the collective, and help to improve the job training and vocational guidance provided to students in schools supported by them; they nominate outstanding workers for instruction at higher and specialized secondary educational institutions on grants provided out of the funds of the enterprises and organizations.

12. Secondary vocational-technical schools, which provide students with a secondary education as well as a trade, and technical institutions, which accept those who have already completed their studies in a general secondary school, are

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both major elements in the training of skilled workers. Research has shown that young people who have completed courses in those educational institutions acquire higher qualifications in their chosen trade more rapidly than workers who have received on-the-job training; they also achieve higher productivity and standards of excellence at work, change their chosen trade less frequently and master related trades with much greater ease. An indication of the creative development of the personality in such cases is that this group of young people produces many inventors and innovators.

13. It should be added that there is also a system for the advanced training of managerial staff and specialists. The most widespread form of such training is that of courses provided by the enterprises, in which some three quarters of engineering and technical personnel have improved their qualifications. Much advanced staff training is carried out in the sectoral institutes for advanced training and their many subsidiaries, the faculties for advanced training in higher educational institutions, and on separate courses.

14. Labour legislation provides for the obligation to grant work that matches the skills and qualifications acquired (art. 184 of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR).

15. A whole system of privileges and advantages is provided for workers who combine work with training (chap. XIII of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR entitled "Privileges for manual and non-manual workers who combine work with training"). In the Byelorussian SSR, 3.7 million people are involved in the various forms of education; that is, every third inhabitant is engaged in study. About 70 per cent of workers employed in sectors of the economy have a higher or secondary education (complete or incomplete). There are 1.5 million people receiving instruction in general secondary schools.

16. Skilled manual workers are trained in vocational-technical schools; there were 158,000 people receiving instruction there in 1981, and 159,000 in 1982. In the academic year 1980/81, 179,000 students received instruction in higher educational institutions; in 1981/82, their number reached 182,000, while some 163,000 people attend specialized secondary schools every year. In addition, many people learn new trades through training on an individual or team basis or on special courses provided in enterprises, institutions and organizations and on collective farms, and also receive advanced training in higher educational institutions, on advanced training courses, and so forth. Some 1.7 million people receive this type of training every year.

17. It should be pointed out that, in the Byelorussian SSR, industrial, organizational, economic and social measures to improve the training and utilization of labour resources are being implemented through the intermediary of planning bodies, ministries and departments.

18. In the Byelorussian SSR, the wages system is being constantly improved and refined by making the growth of incomes directly dependent on higher productivity and quality of work, and the housing and welfare of workers are being improved both in the towns and in the country. Increased attention has been paid to a correct

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division of labour resources between productive and non-productive sectors and among the various branches of the economy and industry, and the operation of job placement services is being improved.

19. In order to discharge those tasks, the State is increasing expenditure on the development of secondary and higher education. During the five years from 1981 to 1985, 380,000 specialists will be trained in higher educational institutions and technical colleges; more than 450,000 people will graduate from vocational-technical institutions in the same period, while expenditure on occupational safety and public health is increasing; the number of places in pre-school institutions will increase by one quarter and 21.1 million square metres of new housing space will be constructed.

20. In order to improve the use of available labour resources, priority is being given to the raising of labour productivity, the development of workers' initiatives, and speedier exploitation of scientific and technical achievements. With those aims in mind, a wide range of scientific and technical measures is being instituted with a view to developing the fuel and energy infrastructure, implementing the food programme, developing transport, improving health care, reducing manual labour, and so forth. The increase in the productivity of social labour set for the current five-year plan will ensure a 90 per cent growth in national income.

21. In this way, against a background of full employment, a policy is being implemented which is flexible and varied in its methods and approach to the different groups of workers. Its purpose is to make the interests of the individual worker coincide as fully as possible with the interests of society as a whole so that work may be as efficient as possible and satisfy the intellectual and material needs of the individual.

22. In the Byelorussian SSR, there are job placement bureaux which operate on the basis of the "Standard regulations concerning job placement bureaux" (adopted by a decision of 1 December 1980) of the State Committee on Labour and Social Affairs of the USSR.

23. The job placement bureau forms part of the system of State labour organs and "acts as go-between in the job placement of the population, helping citizens to exercise the following rights guaranteed by the Constitution: the right to work, the right to choose their trade or profession, the type of job and work in accordance with their inclinations, abilities, training and education, with one account of the needs of society" (art. 1 of the regulations concerning the bureaux).

24. The bureau's main functions are as follows: to help able-bodied members of the population who seek its assistance to find work in enterprises, institutions and organizations; to inform the public about the need for manual and non-manual workers in enterprises; to participate in the work being done by the executive committees of the local Soviets of People's Deputies to regulate the distribution of labour resources and ensure their rational utilization, to reduce staff fluctuations, to make the redistribution of the workforce more systematic and to procure additional reserves for it.

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25. According to the statistics of labour organs, approximately 30 to 50 per cent of workers now find jobs with the help of the bureau. Sociological research has shown that the overwhelming majority of those workers are satisfied with the jobs they chose with the bureau's help.

26. The bureau works with the commissions on vocational guidance for students and job placement for leavers of general secondary schools, set up under the executive committees of the local Soviets of People's Deputies to help find jobs for leavers of general secondary schools and to gather information on the availability of training courses in enterprises. The activities of the above-mentioned commissions are co-ordinated by an interdepartmental council within the Ministry of Education.

27. During the period under review, steps continued to be taken to create more favourable conditions of employment for pensioners. As of 1 January 1980, new benefits were introduced for working pensioners which increased the material incentives for pensioners to continue working. An increase in the maximum pension for pensioners who continue to work, and introduction of the possibility for a number of categories of workers to choose the arrangement they prefer for receiving a pension - either receipt of a pension and wages while they continue to work or receipt of an increased pension following any period of employment after retirement age and subsequent retirement with a pension etc.

28. All the above provisions create more favourable opportunities for all groups of workers to exercise the right to work as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR.

29. In addition to the conditions described above, the employment situation also presents the following characteristics:

(a) As of 1 January 1983, the population of the Byelorussian SSR totalled 9.8 million people. The average annual number of manual and non-manual workers employed in the national economy of the Republic was as follows (in thousands):

Year	Total number of workers manual and non-manual	Number of manual workers out of the overall total
1975	3 577	2 574
1980	4 046	2 885
1981	4 120	2 935
1982	4 200	2 964

(b) The average annual number of women manual and non-manual workers in the national economy was as follows:

Year	Number of women manual and non-manual workers (in thousands)	Percentage of women out of the overall total of manual and non-manual workers
1975	1 907	53
1980	2 139	53
1981	2 180	53

In 1981, the highest percentages of women out of the overall number of manual and non-manual workers were to be found in the fields of social welfare and health care (82 per cent), credit operations and State insurance (82 per cent), commerce and public catering (80 per cent), national education (74 per cent), culture (77 per cent), and State and economic administrative organs and organs of co-operative and public organizations (65 per cent).

(c) The number of women specialists with a higher or specialized secondary education employed in the national economy was as follows:

	1975	1980	1981
Total number of women specialists with a higher or specialized secondary education (in thousands)	485.7	633.1	659
With a higher education	179.6	245.4	256
With a specialized secondary education	306.1	387.7	403
Percentage of women out of the overall number of specialists:			
With a higher education	52.8	53.3	53.9
With a specialized secondary education	64.6	64.5	64.5

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30. The high level of saturation of the economy with qualified workers is tied to the increasing scientific and technical knowledge of the labour force and the successful resolution, in the context of a developed socialist society, of the problem of heightening workers' overall cultural and technical level and developing their personality and aptitudes.

ARTICLE 7. THE RIGHT TO JUST AND FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS OF WORK

1. As already reported, the main guiding principles in this field in the Byelorussian SSR are the right to rest, the right to health protection and the principle of pay in accordance with the quantity and quality of work.

2. During the period under review, the amount of annual paid leave was further increased by the granting of additional paid leave to certain categories of workers. In the period since the submission of the previous report, a significant number of manual and non-manual workers employed in combines, enterprises and organizations in industry, agriculture, construction, transport and communications, in geological prospecting organizations and in hydrometeorological enterprises and organizations received an additional three days' leave. This additional leave is tied to length of service and is calculated as follows: one day for the first three years of service and a further day for each subsequent two-year period of service. Additional leave for continuous service is also granted to workers on State farms and other State agricultural enterprises engaged in livestock-rearing.

3. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR (arts. 21 et al), the State concerns itself with improving working conditions and safety.

4. The Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR gives all citizens the right to health protection. To this end, article 40 provides that this right is ensured by, inter alia, free medical care provided by State health institutions, the improvement of safety and hygiene in industry and special care for the health of the rising generation. This article also mentions the prohibition of child labour.

5. The State has established shorter working hours for manual and non-manual workers under 18 years of age: 36 hours a week for those 16 to 18 years of age, and 24 hours a week for those 15 to 16 years of age (art. 43 of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR).

6. Thus, when they first start work, young workers are in an especially favourable situation. At the same time, they enjoy the same rights as adults in the field of labour relations (art. 174 of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR).

7. In a number of industries, labour law stipulates an even higher minimum age for entering employment. Thus, article 175 of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR prohibits the employment of persons under the age of 18 for arduous work, work in unhealthy or dangerous working conditions or underground work. The list of industries, professions, trades and jobs for which the employment of persons under the age of 18 is prohibited, which was approved by the

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State Labour Committee of the USSR in agreement with the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions on 29 August 1959 and was later supplemented in order to enhance the protection of young workers, is applicable in the Byelorussian SSR.

8. It should also be noted that persons under 18 years of age undergo a preliminary medical examination before being accepted for employment and, after that they undergo a regular medical examination every year until they reach their eighteenth birthday (art. 176) of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR.

9. In considering the question of the minimum working age, another important factor should also be taken into account, namely, the compulsory nature of secondary education in the Byelorussian SSR. Accordingly, almost all young people up to 17 or 18 years of age are studying at some type of educational institution.

10. Another step towards developing and improving the arrangements for granting additional privileges and facilities to help women successfully to combine work with their duties as mothers was the decision of the Council of Ministers of the USSR of 21 June 1979, on measures for further improving the training and skills of production workers. This decision stipulated that "women with children under the age of eight shall receive additional training and improve their skills with the grant of leave from their work while continuing to receive the average monthly pay during their training".

11. In order to create more favourable conditions for combining socially useful work with motherhood, the existing practice and legislation concerning the employment of women who have children and who work part time was made generally applicable. This measure was given legal form in a decision of the State Committee on Labour and Social Affairs of the USSR and the Secretariat of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions of 29 April 1980.

12. Paragraph 2 of the decision specifies that "part-time work (shorter hours or shorter weeks) may be arranged by agreement between the administration and a woman with children when she is hired or between the administration and a woman who is already working, if she cannot work full time because of her child-care responsibilities. The remuneration paid in such cases is proportional to the time worked or is dependent on the output produced". The decision stipulates that part-time work may be arranged either without any time-limit or for any period convenient for the working mother, for example until the child reaches a certain age, for the duration of the school year, and so forth.

13. The régime governing work and rest periods for working women in this category is established by the administration, with the agreement of the local factory-and-works committee of the trade union, according to the wishes of each individual working woman. It can take various forms: shortening of the working day or of the shift to a specific number of hours each day of the week, or reduction of the number of working days per week while maintaining the normal length of the working day, or a combination, namely, shortening of the working day while, at the same time, working fewer days per week. The decision also provides that mothers who work part time are entitled to additional time off in order to nurse their infants, as are all mothers who are nursing or who have children under one year of age.

14. With a view to increasing the health protection of workers and improving occupational safety, important practical work was continued during the reporting period for the purpose of analysing and reviewing the norms governing occupational safety and industrial health. A system of occupational safety standards has been prepared and is being put into practice. This system, which is an integral part of the all-union State standards system, deals comprehensively with the observance of requirements concerning safety techniques and industrial health.

15. A very important place in the system of occupational safety standards is held by the safety standards applicable to industrial equipment, which is the primary source of injury and danger in industry. The main standard in this connection is document SSBT-GOST 12.2.003-74, which specifies the general safety requirements for industrial equipment and the particular details of the standards applicable to specific groups, types and models of industrial equipment.

16. The safety standards for specific groups of industrial equipment include the following: safety requirements governing the basic components in the design of the controls system; requirements for the inclusion of protective devices in the design; safety requirements governing the particular characteristics of assembly and repair work, transport and storage; methods of monitoring (testing) compliance with safety requirements. The standards necessarily apply also to the moving, electrical and other dangerous parts of machinery, and equipment that require barriers, and to the requirements concerning the installation of protective shields, braking systems, and the like.

17. The introduction of such standards helps to ensure the establishment of safety techniques and safe working conditions. It also helps to eliminate structural flaws in industrial equipment and to improve the general level of on-the-job protection in enterprises.

18. The growth of social production results in a steady improvement of the welfare and culture of the people. In Byelorussia, the real per capita income of the population has increased 2.7 times in the past two decades. The social consumption funds have grown more than fivefold.

19. The national economy of the Byelorussian SSR is developing at a steady, progressive pace. For the first two years (1981-1982) of the eleventh five-year plan, the national income of the Republic grew by 11 per cent. For these same two years, the volume of industrial production increased by 9.5 per cent. The sectors that determine technological progress have grown the fastest. The output of goods manufactured by the engineering and metal-working industries increased by 17.1 per cent. This includes the radio, electronics and instrument-making industries, which increased 1.3 times.

20. Social production and national welfare further increased in 1982. In the same year, the national income produced in the Republic increased by 2 per cent, as compared with 1981. In addition, more than three fourths of the national income spent in the Byelorussian SSR was applied to consumption and, taking into account expenditure on the construction of housing and of social and cultural amenities, four fifths of the national income was spent directly on the welfare of the people.

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21. In 1982, industrial production grew by 4.7 per cent, as compared with 1981. Labour productivity increased by 3.2 per cent. In 1982, 320 new lines of products were developed and entered mass production.

22. Despite the difficult weather conditions in 1982, agricultural workers succeeded in increasing the output of many different products. Particular emphasis was placed on developing agro-industrial integration and intersectoral co-operation. In 1982, investments totalling approximately 2 billion roubles, or more than two fifths of all investments, were channelled towards the expansion of the agro-industrial complex, including agriculture, which accounted for 1.6 billion roubles.

23. In 1982, the measures planned in the context of the eleventh five-year plan with a view to promoting social development and improving the welfare of the people continued to be implemented.

24. The new law on Work Collectives conveys broad decision-making powers on the workers themselves in connection with the organization of the work, the fixing of norms and remuneration and the general improvement of the welfare of the people.

25. In accordance with article 11 of this law, labour collectives propose and implement measures for the introduction of progressive forms of labour organization. They also participate in decisions concerning the use of the savings in the wage fund effected during production and discuss and adopt proposals for improving the bonuses awarded to workers and the other grants and benefits provided under the financial incentives fund. Moreover, they monitor the application of existing work norms and of the conditions governing remuneration. Article 14 of the law gives work collectives broad powers in connection with the distribution and use of the economic incentive funds. They also take part in decisions concerning the use of the financial incentives fund, the fund for social and cultural measures and housing construction and the fund for the development of production. In accordance with article 6 of the law, drafts of both long-range and current plans for economic and social development submitted by enterprises, institutions and organizations may not be adopted without prior consideration by the work collectives.

26. The average monthly pay of manual and non-manual workers and collective farmers rose in one year by 2.8 per cent and 4.8 per cent respectively and social consumption funds rose by 4.6 per cent as planned. Measures were taken to strengthen state aid to families with children.

27. Prices of basic necessities in the country remained steady, and very favourable conditions have prevailed for the enjoyment of many kinds of services, in particular, medical care and treatment, rest and tourism facilities, training, urban transport and so forth. Rent, for example, accounts for, at most, 5 per cent of a worker's average monthly wage.

28. In 1982, a total of 80,600 modern apartments were built in the Byelorussian SSR, measuring a total of almost 4.5 million square metres. This made it possible to improve the living conditions of 385,000 persons.

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29. Education, science and culture have continued to develop, and medical services and organized rest facilities for the population have expanded.

30. Pursuant to the law on the State economic and social development plan of the Byelorussian SSR for 1983, which was enacted by the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR on 3 December 1982, in 1983 - the third year of the eleventh five-year plan - national income is expected to increase by 3.8 per cent and industrial output by 3.4 per cent. A wide range of measures for raising the standard of living of the people is envisaged in the plan. In particular, real per capita income is expected to rise by 3.1 per cent.

ARTICLE 8. TRADE UNION RIGHTS

1. In the first report submitted by the Byelorussian SSR, much was said concerning the rights and functions of the country's trade unions. It was pointed out that the right of citizens to join public organizations, including trade unions, had been established in article 49 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR. Concerning trade union activities, article 7 of the Constitution states that trade unions "participate in managing State and public affairs and in deciding political, economic, and social and cultural matters".

2. The Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR also establishes, in article 49, that "public organizations are guaranteed conditions for successfully performing the functions defined in their rules". Article 228 of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR stipulates: "The trade unions shall act in conformity with the rules and statutes they adopt themselves; they shall not be obliged to be registered with any State bodies."

3. Exercising their constitutional right of association, the workers of the Byelorussian SSR participate actively in the affairs of trade unions and other public organizations. There are a large number of such associations and unions in the Republic and nearly all adults in the country belong to such organizations. The membership of scientific and technical societies and of inventors' and innovators' societies alone comes to 780,000.

4. A distinguishing feature of the trade unions is that, whereas the membership of other public organizations is made up of only a section of the workers or representatives of the intelligentsia or a section of the peasants - for example, in co-operatives - the membership of the trade unions, precisely because of their specific character and because they function in the broadest sphere of society - the sphere of work and production - embraces nearly all workers; at present, approximately 99 per cent of the workers of the country are trade union members.

5. In the Byelorussian SSR there are 24 national trade-union committees. Local union organizations operate in enterprises, institutions and organizations. Since the submission of the previous report, there have been significant developments in the life of the Byelorussian unions. The seventeenth trade-union congress of the USSR and the fifteenth trade-union congress of the Byelorussian SSR were held early in 1982. The work done and the decisions adopted at those congresses demonstrate

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clearly that the unity and solidarity of all classes and all strata of the population - workers, peasants and intelligentsia - are characteristic of our society. Thus, the trade unions, formerly an organization consisting mainly of industrial workers, have become an organization of all workers. At the same time, the broadening of the social base of the trade unions and of all their activities is closely connected with the protection of the interests of the working class and of all workers.

6. The trade-union congresses identified the tasks of this most widespread public organization and outlined ways of further increasing the role of the unions in the political system in a developed socialist society.

7. The trade unions have abundant means for implementing these tasks - extensive rights enshrined in the Constitution and the labour legislation of the Byelorussian SSR, many years' experience of participating in the solution of the major problems encountered in the building of a new society, and well-tried forms and methods of work in work collectives. It was again confirmed at the trade-union congresses that the unions consider the further increase of social production and the steady improvement of the well-being of the workers as their major task, and this determines the nature of all their activities. Accordingly, the trade-union organizations of the Byelorussian SSR are carrying out numerous well-tried measures designed to increase the contribution of the unions to enhancing the effectiveness of social production. For that purpose, they use traditional trade-union methods and forms, such as promoting socialist competition, which is a vital means whereby the trade unions can influence economic development; supporting workers' initiatives, progressive undertakings and "counter plans" put forward by the work collectives; harnessing the broad support of the workers and work collectives in the campaign to conserve material and energy resources; actively participating in the elaboration of programmes to increase mechanization and automation of industrial processes; and many others.

8. Co-operation between the trade unions and the State is continuing to grow, as is trade-union participation in the running of State and public affairs. In particular, the trade unions are playing an increasing role in decisions affecting the work, lives and living conditions of the workers. Through such co-operation, by establishing control in spheres of life involving people's day-to-day needs, the trade unions are performing a task of great political importance and profound democratic significance; they are helping to enhance further the workers' consciousness and sense of being masters of their country, who are indeed seeing in their daily lives that the activities of State and economic organs in a socialist society are designed to serve the common interests of the workers.

9. In pursuing their activities, the trade-union organizations of the Byelorussian SSR are motivated by the need to expand and improve in every possible way their co-operation with the organs of State and the various public organizations. The trade-union congresses provided yet another opportunity to take stock of the work done in formulating and concluding collective agreements. One important result of this work will be more efficient implementation of the measures envisaged in the collective agreements. The interim results of the fulfilment by the parties of their obligations under a collective agreement are reviewed at

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trade-union meetings and conferences while the collective agreement is in effect. Questions concerning the elaboration and implementation of collective agreements are discussed periodically in plenary meetings of the national trade-union committees for each branch of the economy and of the regional trade-union councils.

10. At the suggestion of the trade unions, a system of State reporting on the implementation of collective agreements has been introduced. Trade-union work itself involves checking the effectiveness of the implementation of collective agreements and identifying forms and methods of work which need to be endorsed and embodied in legislation.

ARTICLE 9. RIGHT TO SOCIAL SECURITY

1. In its previous report, the Byelorussian SSR presented detailed information concerning the provisions of the Constitution, the Labour Code, the law on State pensions and others regarding the right to social security and social insurance. Statistical data were provided concerning expenditure on social security.

2. During the period covered by the present report, expenditure on social security and social insurance for manual and non-manual workers and collective farmers totalled 1,385 million roubles in 1978, 1,458 million roubles in 1979, and 1,608 million roubles in 1980. Aggregate expenditure out of the State budget on social and cultural measures, public health and science amounted to 2,255.7 million roubles in 1980 and 2,348.8 million roubles in 1981.

3. It should be noted that workers in the Byelorussian SSR pay no contributions for social security and social insurance. Social security and medical services are fully covered by State funds, but in the case of certain kinds of social security for members of collective farms, expenses are also covered in part by the funds of the collective farms.

4. If State expenditure on maintaining housing resources (on the portion not covered by the fixed low rents) and on free education (for example, free use of textbooks in the schools) and payment of student grants is taken into account, total payments and benefits received by the population of the Byelorussian SSR from social consumption funds amounted to 4,016 million roubles in 1980 and to 4,233 million roubles in 1981.

5. During the period covered by the present report, the social security system in the Byelorussian SSR and in the USSR as a whole was further developed through legislation. One of the most important decisions of the Soviet Government is that of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Council of Ministers of the USSR of 22 January 1981, paragraph 10 of which concerns payments to women of maternity and birth grants equal to full pay. Between 1981 and 1983, birth grants and monthly allowances for single mothers increased significantly. Minimum pensions were also raised; they included disability pensions, old-age pensions, pensions in the event of the loss of the breadwinner (decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 2 September 1981), as well as pensions for persons disabled during the Great Patriotic War and for the families of soldiers killed at the front (decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 30 May 1980), for collective-farm workers and several other categories of people.
