

RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION FOR 1998
New York, 22 January and 3 and 6 February 1998

RESUMED ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION FOR 1998
New York, 7 May 1998

SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF 1998
New York, 6–31 July and 5 August 1998

RESUMED SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF 1998
New York, 16 December 1998

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS, 1998

SUPPLEMENT No. 1



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 2000

effective government, maintaining civil order, avoiding large-scale hardship, allowing continuation of commercial activities, preventing environmental damage, and so forth;

- Sectors of the infrastructure and systems of national importance for which compliance must be assured should be identified. The list should include but should not be limited to transport and communication, utilities, finance, national security, public health, nuclear facilities and international relations;
- Each organization responsible for providing critical services should be encouraged or required to develop a plan to solve its year 2000 problems. The plan should outline steps to be taken in systems assessment, repair, testing, implementation and coordination with other entities;
- For areas that are not of primary national importance, a risk analysis should be carried out to establish an order of priority for ensuring compliance. It is now recognized that 100 per cent compliance will be difficult to achieve. For low-risk areas where non-compliance will have little impact, action could be delayed;
- To avoid a domino effect, interdependencies between systems of low priority and areas of national importance must be identified;
- The interface between national systems and the systems of other Governments should be defined. Particular attention should also be given to private-sector service providers, for example, in the areas of communication, air traffic control and power supply, who operate on a regional or global level but are an integral part of the national infrastructure;
- Mechanisms for disseminating candid information about the status of remediation should be established;
- Questions regarding public and private sector liability for damages resulting from non-compliance and warranty issues should be investigated.

3. *Problem solution*

- Validation strategies and testing procedures for all converted or replaced systems and their components should be established;
- A manpower analysis should be carried out to determine the human resources required for the conversion. Many countries, especially developing countries, are already experiencing a shortage of skilled information technology workers. This problem will be aggravated by the year 2000 issue. Developing countries will be particularly vulnerable;
- Budgetary provisions must be made to secure funds for new hardware, conversion software, human

resources and related costs. Further, the financial responsibility for the cost of conversion must be determined. Some countries may consider funding by international organizations, especially the World Bank, which has grant loan funds available;

- Suppliers and designers of systems should be identified and integrated into the validation and testing process, whenever possible;
- As regards the application of the validation and testing process established earlier, systems will be certified or steps to convert systems will be taken according to their priority. Since problems and their solutions may be similar across applications and processes, a mechanism for the exchange of information and the consolidation of activities should be established at the national and international levels.

4. *Contingency planning*

- Governments should establish general contingency plans for all systems and activities of national importance and the systems that support them for continuity of operations. Back-up arrangements should be made at the national and international levels;
- A hotline should be established so that the public can report possible millennium-related problems and obtain assistance in case of emergencies;
- The disaster recovery plans of all systems should be reviewed and updated to avoid loss of data and ensure the resumption of operation as soon as possible;
- In case year 2000 compliance cannot be achieved before 31 December 1999, some critical systems may have to be temporarily decommissioned and replaced by back-up processes. Planning for the establishment of back-up processes for critical infrastructure systems should start immediately. It is important to determine how far in advance such plans will need to be implemented so as to be effective in the event that the deadline cannot be met.

1998/46. Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and 52/12 B of 19 December 1997,

1. *Adopts* the texts contained in annexes I, II and III to the present resolution;
2. *Expresses its appreciation* to the functional commissions for the interest they have taken in reviewing their working methods, and encourages them to continue to do so, taking into account the suggestions and recommendations appearing in annex II to the present resolution, and to adopt practices best suited to their mandates, priorities and responsibilities;

3. Welcomes the reform measures undertaken by the regional commissions, and encourages them to continue to undertake, under the aegis of their respective intergovernmental bodies, further measures to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness as presented in annex III to the present resolution;

4. Decides to continue its deliberations on pending issues pursuant to the mandates given to it, as contained in General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B;

5. Also decides to hold, at its resumed substantive session of 1998, elections for the composition of the bodies as laid down in annex I to the present resolution, so that these bodies are fully constituted from 1 January 1999, and requests its Bureau to work out appropriate mechanisms for the holding of the elections for this purpose;

6. Further decides to bring the present resolution to the attention of the General Assembly in pursuance of paragraph 70 of annex I to Assembly resolution 50/227 and paragraphs 9 and 10 of Assembly resolution 52/12 B.

*47th plenary meeting
31 July 1998*

ANNEX I

Subsidiary bodies identified for restructuring and revitalization

A. COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

1. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development shall remain a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council and shall continue to meet biennially for two weeks.

2. The Commission is encouraged to sharpen the focus of its work, devoting particular attention to the issues of transfer of technology and capacity-building, in particular of the developing countries. In regard to transfer of technology, the examination of concrete applications/activities is encouraged.

3. Effective coordination shall be established with all other functional commissions and with the Economic and Social Council. The Commission should concentrate, in particular, on working closely with the Commission on Sustainable Development and with the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Methods to be employed to enhance these linkages should include the following:

(a) Closer communication should be established between the bureaux of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development as well as with other bureaux of the functional commissions, as appropriate;

(b) Regular communication should take place between the secretariats/offices servicing the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Trade and Development Board;

(c) The outcome of the meetings of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development should continue to be made available to the States Members of the United Nations, including through briefings to delegations in Geneva and New York by the Bureau and secretariat of the Commission;

(d) The outcome of the meetings of the Commission should be shared for information purposes with all relevant functional commissions and other relevant United Nations bodies.

4. The coordination between the Commission and other relevant United Nations bodies, including the regional commissions, should be improved and made more effective.

5. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development shall continue to serve as the secretariat of the Commission. The Commission should make maximum use of the expertise that the secretariat of the Conference can offer, while also drawing, as appropriate, on expertise from elsewhere in the United Nations system, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and relevant specialized agencies.

6. The membership of the Commission is to be reduced from fifty-three to thirty-three with the following geographical distribution: eight members from African States, seven members from Asian States, six members from Latin American and Caribbean States, four members from Eastern European States and eight members from Western European and other States. The term of office is to be four years.

B. COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

7. The Committee for Development Planning shall be renamed the Committee for Development Policy and shall continue to be a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council.

8. The Committee shall comprise twenty-four independent experts with a good mix of expertise, who are to be drawn from the fields of economic development, social development and environmental protection, in order to avoid the need to engage the assistance of consultants and so as to reflect an adequate geographical and gender balance. Membership should include those who are able to contribute on emerging issues and to the multilateral process. The experts should be nominated by the Secretary-General, after consultation with interested Governments, and approved by the Economic and Social Council. The term of office is to be three years.

9. The Committee shall continue the triennial review of the status of the least developed countries and shall meet on this issue once every three years.

10. The Economic and Social Council should decide on an appropriate programme of work for the Committee. In January/February of each year, the Council, at the time of deciding the themes for its substantive session, should advise the Committee about the theme(s) to be considered at the annual session of the Committee, which is not to exceed five working days and is to be held in April/May. The Committee shall submit its report to the Council at its substantive session in July. The report shall also include the proposals of the Committee to the Council concerning its programme of work

for the following year, for consideration and approval at the next organizational session of the Council in January/February.

11. The General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council may also propose, through the Council, issues for consideration by the Committee.

12. The dissemination of information on the work of the Committee should be improved, including through the establishment of an Internet web site and through a presentation by its Bureau on the outcome of its deliberations.

13. In undertaking its responsibilities, the Committee should, in addition to holding its formal meetings, explore the scope for effective preparations for its deliberations via informal networking arrangements. The Secretariat should provide assistance in this regard.

C. COMMITTEE ON NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY AND ON ENERGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

D. COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

14. The two committees shall be merged into a single expert body, to be named the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development, which shall serve as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council.

15. The Committee should comprise, with due attention to geographical representation and gender balance, two sub-groups of twelve experts nominated by Governments and approved by the Economic and Social Council. One sub-group should deal with issues relating to energy, the other with issues relating to water resources. The geographical distribution is to be as follows: six members from African States, five members from Asian States, four members from Latin American and Caribbean States, three members from Eastern European States and six members from Western European and other States. The term of office is to be four years.

16. The Committee shall meet biennially for two weeks on the understanding that the days available should be divided evenly in a flexible manner between the two sub-groups.

17. Upon the recommendation of both or either of the expert groups of the Committee, the Economic and Social Council may decide on modalities for the establishment of ad hoc expert groups, when necessary, to consider issues relating to minerals.

18. In addition, the General Assembly may invite the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the regional commissions to consider effective ways to address, within their respective areas of competence, relevant aspects of this issue.

19. In formulating its programme of work, to be presented to the Economic and Social Council for consideration and decision, the Committee should take into full account the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development so as to ensure that its own programme of work will be structured in a manner that could enable it to contribute to the work of the Commission. The Council, in considering and deciding on the programme of work of the Committee, should ensure the special relationship

between the Committee and the Commission and a coherence between their respective programmes of work. For its part, the Commission is requested to consider which aspects of its multi-year programme of work the Committee can usefully address.

20. The Committee should maintain close links with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the regional commissions and the specialized agencies, as appropriate.

ANNEX II

Functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council with specific responsibilities for the follow-up to the major United Nations conferences

1. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and 52/12 B of 19 December 1997, mandated a review by the Economic and Social Council of the functional commissions of the Council.¹⁴² In recent years, the functional commissions have taken an interest in reviewing their own working methods and should continue to do so, benefiting from the experience gained. Each commission should be encouraged to adopt practices best suited to its mandate and responsibilities. In this respect, the following general suggestions and recommendations are provided by the Council to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the functional commissions.

A. WORKING METHODS

2. Bearing in mind the interlinkages of issues and their cross-cutting nature, there is a need for the functional commissions to strengthen their coordination, while paying careful attention to the mandates and terms of reference of each commission. The Economic and Social Council has to play a key role in this process. In this context, the adoption of a multi-year thematic programme for the functional commissions responsible for follow-up to the major United Nations conferences can be helpful.

3. For those functional commissions that have more than one theme for discussion, sufficient time should be allocated for each of the priority themes so as to enable Member States to have focused and in-depth discussions, bearing in mind the interlinkages between the priority themes.

4. Inter-sessional meetings can help to focus the work of a commission by identifying key elements to be discussed and important problems to be addressed within a specific item pertaining to that work. These meetings should contribute to the preparations for the meeting of a functional commission,

¹⁴² The functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council entrusted with the follow-up to the major United Nations conferences are the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Population and Development and the Commission on Human Settlements. Although the Commission on Human Settlements is a standing committee, the collective term "functional commissions" is used throughout the present annex.