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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 31 July 1998, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SOMAVÍA (Chile)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION (continued)

(b) FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(continued) (E/1998/110; E/1998/L.43)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution E/1998/L.43, submitted under agenda item 3 (b) by the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Roble Olhaye (Djibouti), on the basis of informal consultations and said that it had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.43 was adopted.

Mr. NISHIGAHIRO (Japan) said that the Council's role in providing guidance and coordination to the United Nations development system was of great importance. While the draft resolution just adopted unfortunately failed to provide such guidance in a sufficiently comprehensive fashion, his delegation had supported it in a spirit of consensus and hoped that the discussion of the triennial policy review at the upcoming session of the General Assembly would be productive.

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America) said that the triennial policy review process launched by the draft resolution was of great importance to his delegation. A number of the draft's elements would assist the Secretary-General in finalizing his report to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. However, despite the fact that the Council had been in a better position than ever before to guide the first steps of the triennial policy review process, it had not done enough to fulfil its role under General Assembly resolution 50/227 as provider of overall coordination and guidance for operational development programmes and funds on a system-wide basis. He hoped that the topic would be taken up in a spirit of partnership at the next session of the General Assembly.

Mr. HIDAYAT (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said the Group trusted that the Council's agreement on the draft resolution would set the tone for the General Assembly's discussions of the triennial policy review at its fifty-third session. It wished to express its sincere appreciation for the efforts of the facilitator in bringing about a

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successful conclusion to the difficult negotiations on the draft resolution. While the draft resolution had not included all that might have been desired, it nonetheless addressed the issue of financial resources constructively. The Group of 77 and China stressed that, in his recommendations for the next triennial policy review, the Secretary-General should focus on the roles of technical cooperation among developing countries and of the regional commissions.

Mr. MUKHOPADAYA (India) said that his delegation fully associated itself with the statement just made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The draft resolution just adopted would provide the necessary guidance for future deliberations in the triennial comprehensive policy review exercise, but the Secretary-General's report and the Council's own discussions during the upcoming General Assembly session should address the funding of operational activities for development at a level commensurate with the growing needs of the developing countries. Efforts to increase the availability of resources should not become a purely budgetary exercise that impaired the essential characteristics of the funds and programmes. When finalizing his report on the triennial policy review in the area of humanitarian assistance programmes, the Secretary-General should take particular note of the Council's views on utilizing the capacities existing in developing countries themselves.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the revised guidelines for the review of policies and procedures concerning technical cooperation among developing countries (E/1998/110).

It was so decided.

- (c) REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (continued) (DP/1998/12 and Corr.1 and 2, DP/1998/13, DP/1998/16 and Corr.1, DP/1998/28; E/1998/16, E/1998/35 (Part I), E/1998/37, E/1998/45, E/1998/62, E/1998/70; E/1998/L.11, L.17 and L.45)

The PRESIDENT said he understood that informal consultations had been held on the text of draft decision E/1998/L.45. He suggested that the Council

should waive rule 54 of the rules of procedure, so as to be able to take action on it.

It was so decided.

Draft decision E/1998/L.45 was adopted.

Mr. PAULAUSKAS (Observer for Lithuania), speaking on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, said that time constraints had prevented agreement on the review of the distribution of seats on the Executive Board of the World Food Programme. The draft decision just adopted provided for deferral of the Council's recommendation until a resumed substantive session and postponed action on draft resolution E/1998/L.17. The Group of Eastern European States requested the convening of a resumed session of the Council no later than by the beginning of the substantive work of the Second Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

On many occasions, the Group had demonstrated its willingness to compromise on the issue of the distribution of seats on the executive boards of United Nations operational funds and programmes, most recently in order to facilitate consensus and allow implementation of the reform of the World Food Programme. It stood ready to accommodate the concerns of the regional groups in a compromise solution of that issue, and hoped for their understanding and reciprocity.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on its first regular session of 1998 (DP/1998/12 and Corr.1 and 2); decisions taken by the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA at its first regular session of 1998 (DP/1998/13); decisions taken by the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA at its second regular session of 1998 (DP/1998/16 and Corr.1); decisions taken by the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA at its 1998 annual session (DP/1998/28); annual reports of the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA to the Council (E/1998/45); report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on its first regular session of 1998 (E/1998/35 (Part I)); decisions taken by the Executive Board of UNICEF at its 1998 annual session (E/1998/L.11); annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF to the Council (E/1998/16); report of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme (WFP) (E/1998/37, Supplement No.17); annual report of the Executive Director of WFP to the Council (E/1998/62); and note by

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the Secretariat transmitting information on the resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF (E/1998/70).

It was so decided.

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEME: COORDINATED FOLLOW-UP TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIENNA DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION (continued) (E/1998/60; E/1998/L.23)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the draft agreed conclusions in document E/1998/L.23.

Mr. FULCI (Italy) said that in part I, paragraph 11, of document E/1998/L.23 the phrase "regular budget resources" should be changed to "increased budget resources".

The draft agreed conclusions in document E/1998/L.23, as orally revised, were adopted.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (E/1998/60).

It was so decided.

INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS (continued) (E/1998/56 and 73; E/1998/L.32, L.41 and L.42)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution E/1998/L.32, which he was submitting on the basis of informal consultations. The draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

Ms. ANDAYANI (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the issue of gender mainstreaming but emphasized that there were 12 other critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action that should also be taken into account. The Council should continue to oversee the system-wide coordination on the basis of an integrated approach, including the mainstreaming of a gender perspective. It should also ensure overall coordination of the follow-up to and implementation of the results of all United Nations international conferences in the economic, social and related fields and report thereon to the General Assembly.

Ms. WORGETTER (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the text represented a sound follow-up to the agreed conclusions resulting from the 1997 session.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.32 was adopted.

Ms. FLOR (Germany) said that, by adopting the draft resolution, the Council had shown that the familiar accusation that United Nations bodies were all talk and no action was untrue. The Council had sent a clear signal that gender mainstreaming was a permanent fixture of its work. It was appropriate to recall, however, that the overarching objective was the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming was to achieve gender equality. Thus, it was only a tool in a strategy to promote implementation of the outcome of the Beijing Conference. The adoption of the resolution was a step in the right direction.

The PRESIDENT drew attention to document E/1998/L.41 and said that it contained a draft decision, not a draft resolution as indicated in the document's title, and that it had no programme budget implications. He invited the Council to take action on the draft decision.

Mr. ESCANERO (Mexico) said that paragraph 1 differed from the text which had been agreed upon in informal consultations. In the second line, the phrase "resumed organizational session for 1999" should read "spring organizational session of 1999". In the seventh line, the phrase "including means of implementation" should appear after the phrase "conferences and summits".

Ms. KRISHNA (India) said she had understood that, in the first line of paragraph 1, the words "including, inter alia," were to have been inserted after the word "Council".

Mr. ESCANERO (Mexico) said that the text which had been read out and adopted in informal consultations had not included the words mentioned by the Indian delegation.

Draft decision E/1998/L.41, as orally revised, was adopted.

Mr. HAPSORO (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the informal meeting to be held pursuant to the decision just adopted would help the Council to identify gaps in the implementation of all aspects of conference follow-up.

Ms. KRISHNA (India) said that the exercise provided for in the decision should be broad-based and should take into account the work done by the United Nations at the regional and national levels. The informal meeting on basic indicators should cover all aspects of conference follow-up, including means of implementation. She hoped that the decision's reference to panels of experts would not preclude the use of briefings as a means of informing the Council of the work being done. Moreover, the practice of holding informal meetings should not set a precedent; instead, the lessons learned from such meetings should be integrated into the Council's regular substantive sessions.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution E/1998/L.42.

Mr. YU Qingtai (China) drew the attention of the Secretariat to several errors in the Chinese version of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.42 was adopted.

Mr. GLANZER (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, Ms. MOORE (Canada), Mr. HIDAYAT (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Ms. POULTON (United States of America) and Mr. NISHIGAHIRO (Japan) expressed the appreciation of their delegations for the work of the facilitator in arriving at a consensus text.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the agreed conclusions of the 1997 coordination segment of the Council on freshwater, including clean and safe water supply and sanitation (E/1998/56) and the statement of commitment of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for action to eradicate poverty (E/1998/73).

It was so decided.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) REPORTS OF COORDINATION BODIES (continued) (A/53/16 (Part I); E/1998/21) (continued)

(d) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATICS (continued) (E/1998/L.40)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution E/1998/L.40.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.40 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its thirty-eighth session (A/53/16 (Part I)) and the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1997 (E/1998/21).

It was so decided.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 50/227 AND 52/12 B (continued)
(E/1998/81; E/1998/L.18, L.35 and L.46)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider draft resolution E/1998/L.18 and drew attention to the administrative and programme budget implications in document E/1998/L.35.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) introduced draft resolution E/1998/L.18 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B had entrusted the Council with advancing the reform process, in particular by making better use of its subsidiary machinery by providing guidance and monitoring and integrating its work, thus exercising one of the Council's main Charter functions. Informal consultations to review the subsidiary bodies had been under way since March 1997, focusing on the four functional commissions and the regional commissions. The review had resulted in an agreement on specific measures to streamline and improve the working methods of the Council's subsidiary machinery. Adoption of the proposed measures would result in a decrease in the membership of the Commission on Science and Technology, the termination of the mandates of the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development, resulting in a reduction of expenditure in real terms during the biennium 1998-1999.

He drew attention to some minor changes in the text. First, the material in brackets in paragraph 15 of annex I should be deleted. Second, the following sentence should be added at the end of paragraph 13 of annex III: "In this regard, the Council encourages the Secretary-General to take into account these measures in his report under the agenda item on regional cooperation in 1999." Lastly, paragraph 19 of annex III should be deleted.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.18, as orally revised, was adopted.

Ms. DJATMIKO-SINGGIH (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the measures just adopted would enhance the

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positive interaction among the subsidiary organs of the Council and in turn, strengthen its coordination role. While the negotiations had sometimes been difficult, the spirit of partnership and flexibility displayed had been very encouraging. However, when General Assembly resolution had been adopted, there had been a strong conviction that its successful implementation required the implementation of all its provisions, including the ones on resources, but their implementation had thus far fallen short. It had become urgent for that issue to be addressed.

Mr. GLANZER (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution as the first step in the rationalization and streamlining of the Council's subsidiary machinery.

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) said that his delegation hoped that the adoption of the draft resolution would lead to full implementation of the General Assembly reform measures.

Mr. ITO (Japan) said that, at a time when the United Nations was in a tight budgetary situation and the effectiveness of its activities was being closely scrutinized, the reform exercise had not been meant to reduce activities, but to provide for continuous review of those activities and preparation of the resources needed to deal promptly with problems as they emerged. Without that review, faith in United Nations development activities would further diminish.

Ms. POULTON (United States of America) said that her delegation fully supported the measures provided for in draft resolution E/1998/L.18. The restructuring of the four main subsidiary bodies and the specific recommendations to the functional commissions would streamline their activities and give the Council a greater role in them.

Mr. REYES-RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that equal attention must be given to the mobilization of resources and the impact of funding on reform measures.

Mr. HYNES (Canada) said that, since the negotiations on the resolution just adopted had been led with consummate skill and irreproachable integrity by the Council's Vice-President from Bangladesh, he hoped that the Vice-President would continue to lead the Council's efforts to enhance its capacity to play its role as envisaged in the Charter.

Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon) said that he associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He hoped that the

outcome of the implementation of the resolution just adopted would meet the Council's expectations. Lastly, he said that annex I, paragraph 15, of the resolution should indicate clearly that each of the two sub-groups it mentioned should consist of 12 experts.

Ms. HAWKINS (Observer for Australia) said that, although the Council could have taken more ambitious measures, its resolution represented a positive step towards a more streamlined and efficient Organization.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution E/1998/L.46.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.46 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the utilization of the development dividend (E/1998/81).

Ms. HORMILLA CASTRO (Cuba) said that her delegation attached great importance to all development initiatives, including the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Development Account. It therefore felt that all issues relating to such proposals should be considered by the competent bodies to ensure their success. In the light of the different viewpoints expressed during the Council's debate on the subject, she wondered whether it was appropriate for the Council to take note of the report.

Mr. ATIYANTO (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, recalled that delegations of States members of the Group had expressed some concerns about the report and had proposed that no action should be taken on it. Instead, the matter should be referred to the Second and Fifth Committees of the General Assembly in the context of their consideration of the report which the Secretary-General was to submit pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/235.

Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Council) said that, according to the Legal Counsel, taking note of a document was not the same as taking action on it, since taking note implied neither acceptance nor rejection.

Mr. ATIYANTO (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, since there were different interpretations of the act of taking note, the Council members should decide carefully whether or not to take note of the report.

The PRESIDENT said that, in taking note of the report, the Council would merely be acknowledging that it had received and discussed it. In deciding to take note of the report, the Council would be deciding not to take action on it. However, in view of the concerns expressed, the matter should be discussed in informal consultations and taken up again at the next meeting.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS (continued)

- (a) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/53/65-E/1998/5, E/1998/34 and E/1998/63; E/CN.17/1998/5)
- (d) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN TAX MATTERS (continued) (E/1998/57)
- (e) PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE (continued) (E/1998/77, A/53/173-E/1998/87)
- (f) CARTOGRAPHY (continued) (E/1998/47)

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Committee for Development Planning on its thirty-second session (E/1998/34); the note and the report of the Secretary-General on consumer protection and guidelines for sustainable consumption (E/1998/63 and E/CN.17/1998/5); and the reports of the Secretary-General concerning, respectively, the development of a vulnerability index for small island developing States (A/53/65-E/1998/5), the eighth meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (E/1998/57), the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/225 (A/53/173-E/1998/87), the work of the Fourteenth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance (E/1998/77) and the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (E/1998/47).

It was so decided.

Mr. WEDENIG (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he wished to reiterate the comments he had made on the report of the Committee for Development Planning (E/1998/34) at the 39th meeting of the Council. Chapter I of the report analysed the recent financial crisis in Asia and attempted to draw lessons for policy. The European Union concurred with the Committee for Development Planning on the need to strengthen the architecture of the international monetary system to lessen the frequency and severity of future disturbances. However, the European Union did not see the need to establish a world financial organization, as suggested by the Committee. It was convinced that the range of functions proposed for such a new organization might, if

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necessary, be undertaken within existing structures. It did not believe that greater efficiency would be achieved by increasing the number of institutions dealing with that issue. Regarding the suggestions for future work contained in the report, the European Union welcomed the proposal of the Committee to link its work more closely with future discussions in the Council.

The European Union had not opposed the Council's taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the eighth meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (E/1998/57). However, it had serious concerns about the recommendations in paragraphs 46 to 51 of the report, which contained a number of points that had not been agreed upon by the Group of Experts. The European Union would transmit its comments on the subject in writing to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America) said that his Government had serious concerns regarding the way in which the Committee for Development Planning had carried out its work during its thirty-second session, including its non-compliance with General Assembly resolution 52/210. The United States did not agree with the recommendations contained in the report.

Mr. HAPSORO (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the financial turmoil in East and South-East Asia had become a major concern, as stock markets and currencies had plunged throughout the region and growing financial volatility had spread, adversely affecting the levels of output, employment and inflation in many countries. The pace and depth of the crises, including their impacts on the lives of growing numbers of people in the affected countries, had raised questions about the stability of the international financial system and about how best to sequence capital market liberalization and to control for vulnerability, particularly with respect to short-term capital flows.

The recommendations of the Committee for Development Planning could be considered further at an appropriate time and place. His delegation was interested in the recommendation contained in paragraph 69, which stated that regional development banks, regional funds and cooperative arrangements could assist countries in monitoring the economic situation and raising capital to supplement resources. It could also go along with paragraph 70, especially with regard to the role of foreign private lenders. When a crisis did erupt, foreign private lenders and investors should become intimately involved in seeking its

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resolution and in sharing the costs of the crisis through debt write-off, debt rescheduling or delaying of claims on repayments. International arrangements should also be devised to bring creditors and debtors together to negotiate solutions to the crisis.

Mr. HYNES (Canada) said that he shared the concerns expressed by the Austrian and United States delegations with respect to the report of the Committee for Development Planning.

Mr. YU Qingtai (China) said that the Council should respect the efforts made by the members of the Committee for Development Planning, who were experts serving in their personal capacity.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued)

- (a) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/53/36 (Part I); E/1998/53; E/1998/L.36*)
- (e) UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (continued) (E/1998/7 and Corr.1)
- (f) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE THIRD DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (E/1998/51)
- (g) HUMAN RIGHTS (continued) (E/1998/22, 84, 94 and 95; E/1998/L.4, L.24 and L.48)

The PRESIDENT, referring to the recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights, said that the Council had agreed, in informal consultations, to adopt draft decision 38 (E/1998/L.24, chap. I.B), provided that the reference to the document symbol of the final report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and population transfer was deleted and the report was published and disseminated according to the usual practice of the Secretariat.

Draft decision 38, as orally revised, was adopted.

Mr. WEDENIG (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said he understood that the deletion of the reference to the document symbol would allow for flexibility in the editing of the final report of the Special Rapporteur and that, in accordance with established practice, the final report would contain cross-references to previous reports for purposes of clarity. The deletion of the document symbol should not be interpreted to mean that the Council wanted a new final report from the Special Rapporteur or that previous reports were simply included in the final report.

Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon) said that agreement had been reached during informal consultations to delete the document symbol from decision 38, in the belief that the word "final" should refer not only to the final document but to the Special Rapporteur's study as a whole. That study was reflected in three documents, of which the last report was an integral part and not a summary. It would have made no sense to ignore the earlier reports that had been adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and the Council. His delegation understood that it was the practice, however, when it came to editing the study, for the Special Rapporteur to draw on earlier work to adduce relevant arguments and information.

Mr. AKUNWAFOR (Observer for Nigeria), referring to the Council's adoption of draft decision 22 recommended by the Commission on Human Rights (E/1998/L.24, chap. I.B) said that the situation of human rights in Nigeria had changed dramatically with the advent of a new administration in June 1998. Virtually all political detainees had been released and all charges against them had been dropped. The new leadership had called on self-exiled dissidents to return and support a political programme aimed at restoring civilian rule by May 1999. The international community had been invited to observe the scheduled elections.

In view of those changes, Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/64 was no longer an accurate reflection of the situation of human rights in Nigeria. His Government appealed to the international community to support the new political programme and to make concrete proposals for its implementation.

Mr. AMMARIN (Jordan) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the delegation of Lebanon regarding decision 38.

Mr. HYNES (Canada) said that his delegation expected the Secretariat to make integral sense of the final report referred to in decision 38, an exercise which did not require the inclusion of all previous chapters in their entirety.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council, in connection with its consideration of the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions (E/1998/22), and the administrative and programme budget implications of the draft decisions recommended for adoption by the Council (E/1998/L.4), to take

action on draft decision E/1998/L.48, which was the result of informal consultations.

Draft decision E/1998/L.48 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution L.36*, concerning the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which had been re-issued for technical reasons. The draft resolution had no budget implications.

Ms. SINGGIH (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, announced that Austria, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Turkey had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.36* was adopted.

Ms. SINGGIH (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed appreciation for the cooperation and flexibility demonstrated during negotiations. Steps should be taken to ensure that the resolution was implemented effectively, strengthening the Institute for the benefit of all Member States.

Mr. THEUERMANN (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed the hope that implementation of the resolution would help the Institute overcome the difficulties it was currently facing.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/1998/53); the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/53/36 (Part I)); the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/1998/7 and Corr.1); the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (E/1998/51); the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions (E/1998/22); and the report of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights (E/1998/84).

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said that informal consultations on the note by the Secretary-General, entitled "Privileges and immunities of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the independence of judges and lawyers" (E/1998/94), had not yielded a consensus. In view of the urgency of the matter,

he took it that the Council wished him to refer it to the Bureau for consideration and subsequent referral back to the Council.

It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (continued) (E/1998/L.44 and L.47)

Mr. AL-HASSAN (Oman), supported by Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon) and Mr. AL-HARIRI (Syrian Arab Republic), said that his delegation wished to express its strong concern and dissatisfaction with the tendency for Arabic-language versions of documents needed for consideration of items on the Council's agenda to be distributed late or, in some cases, not at all.

The PRESIDENT said that, while practical reasons existed for late distribution of documents in some cases, he agreed that the principle of having documents distributed in all six official working languages of the Organization must be upheld.

Mr. REYES RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) pointed out that certain documents contained substantive errors of translation, which altered their meaning. The Secretariat should take steps to correct them.

The PRESIDENT said that such problems occurred quite often and that it was normal practice to point out errors to the Secretariat, so that they could be rectified.

Mr. CORDEIRO (Brazil) said that translation errors often led to texts no longer reflecting the agreement which had been reached between delegations. The Secretariat should check the text with the facilitator to ensure consistency.

Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon) said that it was extremely important to ensure consistency between original texts and their translations. His delegation had noted errors in the Arabic versions of documents and felt very strongly that it had a right to raise objections about them.

The PRESIDENT said that the Secretariat would follow normal procedure and consult with the translation services in question about that issue.

He invited the Council to take action on draft decision E/1998/L.44, entitled "Dates of sessions of subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council".

Draft decision E/1998/L.44 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT announced that action on draft decision E/1998/L.47 would be deferred.

Elections to subsidiary bodies of the Council

The PRESIDENT said that the Group of Western European and Other States had informed the Secretariat of Sweden's withdrawal from membership of the Commission on Sustainable Development and of the Group's endorsement of Finland's candidature to complete Sweden's term. He took it that the Council wished to elect Finland to the Commission for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring at the close of the Commission's session in 1999.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said he had been informed that the Group of Asian States had endorsed India's candidature to fill one of the vacancies on the Programme Coordination Board of the Joint and Co-Sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). In the absence of other candidates, he took it that the Council wished to elect India by acclamation for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 1999.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.