

pate at the beginning of the Council's summer session in the discussion of the item on international economic and social policy;

2. *Considers* that the statements of the Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions and the Director of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut, and the executive heads of the specialized agencies, should focus on issues of vital concern to their regions and sectors which have important implications for international economic and social policy and require examination and decision by the Council;

3. *Recommends* the President of the Economic and Social Council to hold, at the beginning of the Council's summer sessions, periodic meetings of the Bureau with the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs, the Secretary of the Council, the Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions, the Director of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut and, whenever possible, the Chairmen of the regional economic commissions or their representatives, so that the Council will be in a better position to assist the regional economic commissions and the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut to discharge their functions in accordance with their terms of reference and within the framework of the Second United Nations Development Decade;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, at the Council's summer sessions:

(a) To arrange for the Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions and the Director of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut to take part as appropriate in the meetings of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and its Preparatory Committee;

(b) To make the necessary arrangements for the Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions and the Director of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut or their authorized representatives to take part in the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination;

5. *Further requests* that the report of the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination focus attention on one or more issues requiring priority consideration by the Council in the field of co-ordination or sectoral developments, and that the report on the meetings of the Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions should similarly draw attention to issues in the field of regional co-operation requiring policy decisions by the Council;

6. *Decides* that the agenda item for the general debate should be reworded to read "General discussion of international economic and social policy, including regional and sectoral developments".

*1836th plenary meeting
28 July 1972*

1730 (LIII). Rationalization of the work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary organs

The Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing its continued obligation to consider improved working methods under General Assembly resolution 2579 (XXIV) of 15 December 1969, entitled "Final report of the Enlarged Committee for Programme and Co-ordination",

Conscious of the continued need to strengthen and render more compact its co-ordinating machinery,

Recognizing that the problem of documentation both results from and compounds the difficulties of an unreasonably crowded calendar of meetings of the Council, its subsidiary committees and commissions, related bodies and other organizations in the United Nations system concerned with social and economic development,

Recognizing also that the establishment of additional subsidiary bodies in recent years has not been accompanied by a reconsideration of the division of work among subsidiary bodies as a whole,

1. *Calls for* the close observance of its resolutions on measures to improve the organization of the work of the Council adopted at its fifty-first session (resolutions 1621 (LI)-1624 (LI) of 30 July 1971);

2. *Establishes* a working group in which Governments of all States members of the sessional committees of the Council which indicate by 10 January 1973 their wish to participate may do so, to meet initially for not more than 10 working days after the Council's organizational meetings in January 1973 to review the terms of reference of all the Council's committees, commissions and other subsidiary bodies, to consider whether the tasks of all such bodies could be arranged in ways which would reduce the number of such bodies without prejudice to the conduct of those tasks, to consider whether any such body can henceforth be justified in meeting more frequently than the established norm of once in two complete years, to consider whether a greater interval than two years would be appropriate in the case of any such bodies, and to report to the Council at its fifty-fourth session on its conclusions and any possible recommendations on these matters;

3. *Forwards* to the Working Group all the relevant proposals submitted to the Working Group of the Co-ordination Committee at the Council's fifty-third session, requesting it to bear in mind paragraph 5 of Council resolution 1621 A (LI) and resolution 1472 (XLVIII) of 13 January 1970 and the annex thereto, concerning the reconstitution of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to facilitate the deliberations of the Working Group by preparing a short note which would:

(a) Provide statistics on the number and length of meetings of the Council and all its subsidiary and related

bodies in 1972, the number of Secretariat staff involved in servicing the meetings and the man-months spent, the number of delegations involved in each meeting and, so far as possible, figures for the cost of servicing those meetings;

(b) List in diagrammatic form, under the main subject areas of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, those standing intergovernmental and expert bodies in the

United Nations system concerned with each area, giving each body's terms of reference;

5. *Decides* to refrain from creating any new subsidiary organs until the accomplishment of the mandate of the Working Group established under the present resolution, and to re-examine this provision at its fifty-fourth session.

1837th plenary meeting
28 July 1972

OTHER DECISIONS

Rationalization of the work of the Council and its subsidiary organs

(*Agenda item 16*)

At its 1837th meeting, on 28 July 1972, the Council reaffirmed the principle that its subsidiary organs should meet not more frequently than every other year and invited those bodies meeting more frequently to consider whether biennial meetings would not be feasible.

All meetings of subsidiary and associated organs should conform to the Council's schedule of meetings and not *vice versa*. To this end, starting in 1974 the Council's first regular session should begin on the second Tuesday of April and its second regular session on the first Wednesday of July.

There should be a strict enforcement of the six weeks' rule for the circulation of documents before meetings, in all working languages, without prejudice to the other languages, by the dropping of items from the agenda automatically when the rule is violated, unless the Council, with the concurrence of the additional members of the sessional committees, decides otherwise at its organizational meetings or its first regular session.

Provided some progress is made towards the goal of merging or eliminating subsidiary organs which are less relevant to the present-day work of the Council, consideration may be given, if it is deemed necessary for the completion of the allotted programme of work, to a lengthening of the time during which the Council itself meets.

The Chairman may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one quarter of the members of a committee are present. The presence of a majority of the members shall be required for any decision to be taken.

Requests for reports and studies should be limited to those which are strictly necessary, and automatic time schedules for progress reports should not be included in resolutions (this latter provision will have to be implemented on a case-by-case basis). Intergovernmental bodies should, as a matter of routine, request the Secretariat to provide time-tables for the production of reports before stipulating the sessions to which they are to be presented.

The Council recommends to the General Assembly that it adopts a similar procedure for reports which the Council must consider.

Preambular paragraphs of resolutions should be concise and should not be too numerous.

The Council should consider taking action by decision rather than by the adoption of a resolution, whenever this procedure may expedite the work of the Council.

The Council should decide, when requesting a specific report, whether that report must be considered by the Council and thus become the subject of an agenda item or whether it can merely be circulated for information.

The Secretary-General should communicate to members of the Council and its sessional committees, as soon as possible after the Council has considered the provisional agenda for the following session, an annotated provisional agenda for the next session which would indicate briefly the history of each item, the available documentation, the substance of the matter to be discussed and relevant earlier decisions by United Nations organs.

The Council instructs its subsidiary bodies to proceed to the fullest feasible extent in accordance with this decision, without prejudice to the observance of paragraph 10 of resolution 1623 (LI) of 30 July 1971.

Measures to improve the documentation of the Council

(*Agenda items 16 d and 17*)

At its 1836th meeting, on 28 July 1972, the Council:

(a) Took note of the report of the Secretary-General on measures to improve the documentation of the Council;¹⁰⁴

(b) Drew attention to the decisions taken by the Council at its fifty-third session on the rationalization of the work of the Council and its subsidiary organs;¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ E/5102.

¹⁰⁵ See decision above entitled "Rationalization of the work of the Council and its subsidiary organs", p. 24.