



**Economic and Social
Council**

PROVISIONAL

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Organizational session for 1996

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 25 January 1996, at 10 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan)

President: Mr. GERVAIS (Côte d'Ivoire)

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

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the organizational session of the Economic and Social Council for 1996.

STATEMENT BY THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT said that 1995 had been an exciting year. Members of the Council had introduced innovative ideas on interregional cooperation, had strengthened the Council's ability to follow up on major conferences, had found ways of involving non-official actors in their deliberations and had resolved difficult issues such as the question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the Fourth World Conference on Women.

However, the Council's ability to deal with critical development issues remained limited, and its deliberations had little impact on the development prospects of the many people who lived in poverty. A vigorous Council was essential to the struggle for development. Instead of seeking to address the structural causes of underdevelopment, the tendency was to exhort developing countries to help themselves; as a result attention was diverted from serious questions such as how to ensure economic growth, regulate private capital flows, build equitable trade regimes and effect technology transfers. A series of global summits had established priorities for different areas of development, but Member States seemed unwilling to fulfil the financial commitments that they had made. The Council would not be able effectively to promote development, unless they did so.

That did not, however, mean that the Council must await political change before taking steps to increase its own effectiveness. Many aspects of its working methods and the organization of its subsidiary bodies merited reform, and the questions posed by its critics must be addressed. The Council must work towards better ways to address the relevant issues, crystallize its

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deliberations into decisions and increase its effectiveness while maintaining its democratic function. Unfortunately, there was a tendency to formulate proposals that addressed peripheral issues; moreover the response to a specific proposal often depended on where the proposal came from rather than on what it could contribute to the debate. He pointed out that he had made specific proposals in his closing remarks to the Council's 1995 session in Geneva and in a recent letter addressed to members of the Council, the text of which was available in the meeting room.

ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT informed the Council that the Group of African States had endorsed the candidacy of Mr. Gervais (Côte d'Ivoire) for the office of President of the Council.

Mr. Gervais (Côte d'Ivoire) was elected President by acclamation.

Mr. Gervais (Côte d'Ivoire) took the Chair.

The PRESIDENT said that, under rule 18 of its rules of procedure, the Council was required to elect four Vice-Presidents. He had been informed that, as a result of consultations among the regional groups, the following candidates had been nominated: Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina), Mr. Henze (Germany), Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic) and Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon).

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina), Mr. Henze (Germany), Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic) and Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon) were elected Vice-Presidents of the Council for 1996 by acclamation.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT noted that, although it was generally agreed that peace and development were interdependent, and although no one disputed the importance, in that connection, of economic and social development, little had been done thus far to tackle the roots of poverty and underdevelopment, the reason being that the political will was lacking. All the members of the Organization were, to varying degrees, responsible for that situation.

Since 1996 had been designated International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, members of the Council should now direct their efforts to achieving that goal. Rationalization of the activities of the major United Nations specialized agencies for development had been completed or was under way, and the division of labour established under General Assembly resolution 48/162 should lead to more effective action in the field.

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Particular attention should be given to the development of the poorest countries throughout the world. In 1995, attention had been focused on Africa; the participation, at the high-level segment, of Ministers and executive heads of the specialized agencies had led to fruitful discussions and to dialogue with the directors of the Bretton Woods institutions. Unfortunately, the results of those meetings had not been sufficiently publicized. It was important to ensure that that did not happen again in 1996, when the high-level segment, would be focusing on international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In addition, the Council would have to continue its follow-up of the major international conferences to ensure that everyone fulfilled their commitments, as far as possible. The work of the specialized agencies and institutions must be strengthened so that the progress made at high-level meetings did not disappear into administrative red tape.

The long-standing belief in the importance of cooperation seemed to be weakening, as demonstrated by the recent steep decline in resources available for development efforts. If development was, indeed, a primary concern of the Organization, it was essential that adequate resources be made available to it. Currently, half of the official development assistance channelled through the Organization was used for emergency relief operations.

Now that ideological rivalries had ended, the Organization was in a position to promote true cooperation and solidarity world wide, and he urged all members of the Council to work towards that goal.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (E/1995/2)

The agenda was adopted.

ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS (E/1995/130; E/1996/8, E/1996/9; E/1995/L.11)

Executive Board of the World Food Programme (E/1995/130; E/1996/8; E/1995/L.11)

The PRESIDENT, drawing attention to documents E/1996/8 and E/1995/L.11, annex II, recalled that at its 60th meeting, the Council had decided to postpone the election of two members from list A and one from list C. He invited the Council to proceed with the election, saying that the secretariat had been informed that the Group of African States supported the candidacies of Mauritania and Tunisia and that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States supported the candidacy of the Dominican Republic. Since the number of

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candidates endorsed by those groups, was equal to the number of vacancies for each group, he took it that the Council wished to elect them by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Dominican Republic, Mauritania and Tunisia were elected members of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme by acclamation.

The PRESIDENT said that since the membership of the Executive Board was complete, the Council would draw lots to determine the initial terms of office for all of the new members of the Executive Board.

The Council decided by the drawing of lots that Cameroon, Finland, India, Paraguay, Sweden and Tunisia would serve for three-year terms, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Mauritania, Norway and Pakistan for two-year terms and Angola, the Dominican Republic, Japan, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and Uganda for one-year terms.

Commission on Population and Development (E/1996/9)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to elect 20 members of the Commission on Population and Development. In that connection, he drew attention to document E/1996/9.

Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Council) read out the following list of candidates: Iran, Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and the Syrian Arab Republic for the six vacancies for the Group of Asian States; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine for the two vacancies for the Group of Eastern European States; Cuba, El Salvador, Peru and Venezuela for the four vacancies for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and Finland, Italy and Malta for the Group of Western European and other States. The Group of African States was not yet ready to present its candidates.

The PRESIDENT said that since the number of candidates endorsed by the various groups was equal to the number of vacancies for each group, he took it that the Council wished to elect them by acclamation and to postpone to a later date the election of five candidates from the Group of African States.

It was so decided.

Cuba, El Salvador, Finland, Iran, Italy, Korea, Malta, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, the Syrian Arab Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and Venezuela were elected members of the Commission on Population and Development.

The PRESIDENT said that since it was the customary practice that drawing lots for the initial terms of membership for elected members should take place only when all vacancies in a body had been filled, the Council would postpone the drawing of lots to a later session.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.