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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly has decided that the Fifth Committee should consider the administrative and budgetary aspects of chapter V, sections A, B and E, chapters XXV, XXVIII, XXIX and XXXI, sections D to F, of the report of the Economic and Social Council. ^{1/} In addition, it feels that chapter III, section G, dealing with the dissemination of information and the mobilization of public opinion relative to problems of development, may also be of interest to the Fifth Committee.
2. Section G of chapter III, sections A and B of chapter V, section A of chapter XXV, and sections E and F of chapter XXXI are being considered by the Fifth Committee under agenda item 79 (Proposed programme for the biennium 1974-1975 and medium-term plan for the period 1974-1977), while section D of chapter XXXI is being considered by the Fifth Committee under agenda item 82 (Pattern of conferences). The present note, therefore, deals only with the other chapters and sections to be considered by the Committee under agenda item 12.
3. Section B of chapter XXV of the Council's report deals with the reports of the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In accordance with the terms of its resolution 1728 A (LIII), the Council examined in depth the reports of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The Fifth Committee will consider the question of interagency co-ordination in the administrative and budgetary fields under agenda item 80 (Administrative and budgetary co-ordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the IAEA), on the basis of the report submitted to the Assembly by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/9003).

4. Section C of chapter XXV deals with the reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) and of the Joint Meetings of CPC and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). The Council had before it the report of the Chairman of CPC and the Chairman of ACC on the Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC (E/5371). The report of CPC on its fourteenth session was not before the Council under this item, in view of the decision by the Council that CPC at its fourteenth session should deal only with the item on the Secretary-General's 1974-1975 programme budget and the medium-term plan, which is covered under another section of the Council's report.

5. Section D of chapter XXV covers the reports of ACC. For the discussion on this item, the Council had before it the annual report of ACC (E/5829 (part I)), a special report by ACC on employment policy in the Second United Nations Development Decade (E/5829 (part II)) and the annual report of ACC on expenditures in relation to programmes (E/5359).

6. In regard to items covered in chapter XXV, the Council took a number of decisions, which may be summarized as follows:

(a) The Council took note of the reports of the specialized agencies and IAEA and decided to request the agencies to take note of the comments made on the reports, in particular concerning the presentation of the reports and the co-ordination of the activities of the various organizations, at the Council's fifty-fifth session. The Council further decided to accept the order for in-depth reviews of the annual reports of the specialized agencies and IAEA as suggested in the report of ACC for 1972/73 (E/5829 (part I)); to continue the agency in-depth reviews in 1975; and to review, prior to that completion, the guidelines for these annual reports in the light of its review of the agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies and IAEA, in accordance with paragraph 13 of its resolution 1768 (LIV), and having due regard to the necessity of encouraging those agencies to participate more actively in the policy-elaborating process of the Council, as recommended in Council resolution 1771 (LIV) and also taking into consideration the debates on this subject during the fifty-fifth session of the Council.

(b) The Council took note of the annual report of ACC for 1972/73 and placed on record the fact that it considered that report to be a further step forward in the implementation of its resolution 1643 (LI); in addition, the Council recommended to ACC that further efforts should be undertaken to ensure the comparability of terminology and concepts in the existing medium-term plans, so as to permit more meaningful prior consultations, and welcomed the decision of ACC to hold regular meetings of programme planning officers, considering that, in addition, joint informal discussions between these officers and CPC, when appropriate, would be a useful method of exchanging experience and of promoting system-wide compatibility.

(c) In resolution 1800 (LV), the Council instructed its subsidiary bodies to propose the designation of international years only on the most important occasions and, where possible, to propose instead celebrations of briefer duration;

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it recommended to the General Assembly that it similarly instruct its subsidiary bodies.

(d) The Council decided to approve the topic of information systems and computer use for in-depth study in 1974 and that the study should result in the submission by ACC to the Council at its fifty-seventh session of a plan containing a sequence of steps to develop compatible information systems involving common concepts for supporting the management of programmes and projects, as well as the measures envisaged to attain that end, and that the plan should also include the best possible estimate of the resources required by each element of the United Nations system, in order to facilitate the taking of concrete steps to achieve this objective.

(e) The Council decided to recommend to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session that the Assembly should no longer require the submission to it of a separate report on protein, as requested in Assembly resolution 2416 (XXIII), in view of the request in paragraph 2 of Council resolution 1728 A (LIII) for triennial reports from the Protein Advisory Group. The Council also indicated that the adoption of its recommendation would not preclude the Secretary-General from issuing a covering note to those reports incorporating a statement on the protein problem.

(f) The Council decided, in view of the more comprehensive reporting planned in the area of natural resources, to discontinue the triennial report on water resources development.

(g) The Council decided that, when a subsidiary body of the Council believed that it had completed all appropriate action pursuant to an in-depth review requested by the Council, that subsidiary body should make a short recommendation to the Council to the effect that no future action by the Council was necessary.

(h) The Council decided that representatives of the United Nations Development Programme should be invited to participate in the proceedings of any interagency advisory committee of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination dealing with drug abuse.

7. Chapter XXVIII of the report of the Council deals with pending reports of the Joint Inspection Unit. The Council took note of the reports and of the note by the Secretariat on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the programme of recurrent publications of the United Nations (E/L.1562).

8. Chapter XXIX of the report of the Council deals with the rationalization of the Council's method of work and structure. Section A covers the report of the Working Group on Rationalization. The Council had before it the report of the Working Group on Rationalization (E/5259) and chapter V of the report of CPC on its thirteenth session. Section B covers the measures to improve the documentation of the Council. The Council had before it a report by the Secretary-General on that subject (E/5355), a list of the documents submitted to the Council at its fifty-fifth session (E/5355/Add.1/Rev.1) and a note by the Secretary-General on the form and content of the report of the Council to the General Assembly (E/L.1563).

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9. In regard to the items covered in chapter XXIX, the Council took a number of decisions, which may be summarized as follows:

(a) In resolution 1767 (LIV), the Council urged all Member States which had not yet done so, particularly the permanent members of the Security Council, to ratify the amendment to the Charter at an early date pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI), with a view to making the amendment effective before the convening of the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly, if possible. At the fifty-fifth session of the Council, its Secretary, reporting on behalf of the Secretary-General, stated that 88 States Members of the United Nations had now ratified the amendment to Article 61 of the Charter adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 2847 (XXVI), by which the membership of the Council would be doubled. In order to enter into force, an amendment to the Charter had to be ratified by two thirds - in other words, 88 at the time - of the States Members of the United Nations, including the five permanent members of the Security Council. The Council took note of the report made on behalf of the Secretary-General.

(b) In resolution 1768 (LIV), the Council decided that it should in alternate years concentrate its attention on the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy, in particular during the summer session, and on other areas which required policy guidance and action. The Council decided further that it should annually discharge its continuing responsibilities under the Charter, especially in the consideration of programming and co-ordination matters and human rights, in the assessment of the world economic and social situation, as well as in the performance of those tasks resulting from decisions of competent organs of the United Nations. The Council decided also that the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy should be undertaken by each organ which had responsibility in a particular field or sector. The results of all sectoral or regional reviews should be transmitted to the Committee on Review and Appraisal, in accordance with the relevant decisions. The Committee for Development Planning, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2801 (XXVI), should submit its expert comments to the Committee on Review and Appraisal. The report of the Committee on Review and Appraisal should be considered by the Council, together with the result of all the sectoral and regional reviews. The conclusions and recommendations of the Council should be transmitted to the General Assembly, which would finally decide on them and revise the International Development Strategy accordingly, as required. The Council further decided that it should continue to take all appropriate action to keep world public opinion increasingly informed of the implementation of the goals and policy measures of the International Development Strategy, in particular through the activities of the Office of Public Information and the information services of the United Nations organs concerned; that in the alternate year the Council should concentrate on the examination of problems and areas of present or potential significance for development and international co-operation. In those years, the Council should also carry out a comprehensive policy review of operational activities throughout the United Nations system. The Council organ to which the functions of programming and co-ordination were delegated should: examine and co-ordinate the programme objectives submitted by the Council's subsidiary bodies, in the light of the system

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of medium-term planning and programme budgeting; consider, on a sector-by-sector basis, the activities and programmes of the agencies of the United Nations system; make recommendations for the adoption of the programmes of the United Nations, taking into account the relevant policy decisions and the need to avoid overlapping and duplication; recommend guidelines for the agencies of the United Nations system on their programmes and activities. The Council requested the ACC, within the limits of its competence, to extend the prior consultation procedure to the medium-term plans of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, and reaffirmed that the Council, in order to fulfil its responsibilities under Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, should consider the reports of its functional bodies responsible in the field of human rights and, on that basis, it should make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly and examine and approve the work programmes of the United Nations in the field of human rights. The Council further decided that a review of the terms of reference of its subsidiary bodies should be undertaken. The autonomous organizations, regional economic commissions and specialized agencies were also requested, where necessary, to undertake a similar review of their subsidiary bodies. The Council further decided that it should review the existing agreements between the United Nations and IAEA with a view to strengthening the coherence of the system; to invite the Secretary-General to submit his views and recommendations for the further restructuring of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs as early as possible for the Council's consideration and appropriate recommendations for final decision by the General Assembly, and that the calendar of conferences should be so arranged that the Council's body responsible for co-ordination, the Committee for Development Planning, the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission and the regional economic commissions would meet every year unless any of those organs decided or had decided otherwise with the concurrence of the Council; all other subsidiary and expert or advisory bodies would meet biennially unless the Council decided otherwise, and their meetings would be so timed as to ensure the submission of their reports in good time for the relevant sessions of the Council, and where appropriate, to the Committee on Review and Appraisal, and spaced so as not to overlap or follow too closely upon each other and so as to ensure that their programme objectives were fully reflected in the work programme and budget to be submitted biennially to the Council. The Council requested other organizations and agencies to ensure that the meetings of their review and appraisal bodies were so timed as to make the results available in time for the over-all review and appraisal of the progress achieved within the framework of the International Development Strategy.

(c) In resolution 1769 (LIV), the Council requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations concerned on ways in which the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development could be strengthened and to report on the conclusions of his consultations, together with his own analysis of the situation and his own recommendations, to the Committee on Science and Technology for Development at its second session.

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(d) In resolution 1770 (LIV), the Council decided, without prejudice to rule 17 of its rules of procedure, that, except in the case of reports of subsidiary and other bodies on meetings which had concluded 12 weeks or less before the opening of the session of the Council, items on the Council's agenda should be automatically postponed to the following session when the documentation called for had not been made available to members of the Council six weeks before the opening of the session; that, before any resolution or decision involving the preparation of documentation for submission by specific dates was adopted by the Council or any of its subsidiary bodies, the Secretary-General should indicate to that body whether he would be able to comply with the deadline; in cases where the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Council, the Secretary-General should inform the Council at its organizational meetings when he would be able to submit the required documentation. The Council requested the Secretary-General to take early measures to improve the present record in the production of documents for the Council and its subsidiary bodies and to take steps to ensure that documents submitted to the Council, its subsidiary bodies and functional commissions conform strictly to the provisions of paragraph 8 of Council resolution 1623 (LI).

(e) In resolution 1771 (LIV), the Council recommended that the formal group dialogue which characterized the existing annual meetings between CPC and ACC should develop into a more active working discussion of questions currently on the agenda of the Council; invited the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to participate more actively at the appropriate level in the discussions of the Council and also of its subsidiary bodies; decided to review the progress made in the implementation of this resolution at its fifty-eighth session.

(f) The Council decided that its subsidiary bodies, with the exception of the regional economic commissions, might not create either standing or ad hoc intersessional subsidiary bodies without prior approval by the Council.

(g) The Council decided to consider at its fifty-sixth session the entire question of the interrelationship of the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Science and Technology for Development and to request the Secretary-General to report to the Council at its fifty-sixth session, after consultations with Member States, on all aspects of the present relationship between the two Committees and to recommend possible solutions to problems of overlapping and duplication.

(h) In resolution 1807 (LV), the Council decided to concentrate its attention at future sessions on a limited number of carefully selected major policy issues, to be studied in depth with a view to elaborating concrete action-oriented recommendations; requested its subsidiary bodies, within the framework of their respective competences, in examining the questions on their agenda and reporting thereon to the Council, to take into account the orientation of the Council's work approved in its resolution 1768 (LIV) and to highlight only those specific questions on which action was required by the Council; decided further that, save for the biennial consideration of the work programme and budget and the medium-term plan and in exceptional circumstances where urgent matters

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had arisen after the adoption of the Council's annual programme of work at its organizational meetings in January of each year, the sessional Co-ordination Committee should not meet at the Council's first regular annual session and the sessional Social Committee should not meet at its second regular annual session; requested the Secretary-General, when preparing the programme of work for the year, to arrange the agenda items in an integrated manner, so that similar and connected issues would be discussed in one debate and under a single heading; authorized its officers to prepare on an experimental basis, in consultation with members of the Council and its sessional committees and with the assistance of the Secretariat, a list of a limited number of major policy issues and other major items, aiming at not more than 15 per session for the Council's programme of work for 1974, in accordance with the provisions of the resolution 1807 (LV), for consideration and approval by the Council at its organizational meetings in January 1974; decided to consider, as soon as possible, amending its rules of procedure in order to provide for the representation of all regional groups of countries among its officers.

(i) The Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General on measures to improve the documentation of the Council; decided to request the Secretary-General to pursue the arrangements envisaged therein, taking into account the comments made during the discussion of the report at the Council's fifty-fifth session; decided further to request the Secretary-General to continue to submit at the beginning of each regular session of the Council a document containing a list of the documents submitted to the Council at that session, indicating the dates on which they were submitted and the number of pages they contained.

(j) The Council decided that its report to the General Assembly should consist of the following: the introduction to the report signed by the President of the Economic and Social Council; a chapter containing the issues which were brought to the attention of, or required action by, the General Assembly; a chapter containing a summary of the debate on international economic and social policy, including regional and sectoral developments; under each item considered by the Council - the items might be grouped under appropriate chapters - a succinct review of the background thereof and a repertorial summary of the relevant debates, including all procedural steps and records of voting, and of the actions taken by the Council; if the item had been referred to a sessional committee, the full report of the committee concerned should be reproduced; a chapter on organizational matters; annexes containing the agenda of the sessions of the Council, the membership of the Council and its subsidiary and related bodies, and the calendar of meetings.
