



## Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

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Organizational session for 1999

### PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 20 January 1999, at 10 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)

President: Mr. FULCI (Italy)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the organizational session of the Economic and Social Council for 1999.

ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT informed the Council that the Group of Western European and Other States had nominated Mr. Fulci (Italy) for the post of President of the Council for 1999.

Mr. Fulci (Italy) was elected President by acclamation.

Mr. Fulci (Italy) took the Chair.

The PRESIDENT said that in accordance with rule 18 of its rules of procedure, the Council must elect four Vice-Presidents. After consultations between the regional groups, the following candidates had been nominated: Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Group of Asian States; Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho), Group of African States; and Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia), Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho) and Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) were elected Vice-Presidents of the Council for 1999 by acclamation.

The PRESIDENT said he had been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States that additional time was needed for consultations regarding their candidate for Vice-President. Therefore, in accordance with rule 19 of the rules of procedure, Mr. Sychov (Belarus) would continue to serve in that capacity until his successor was elected.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT said that the first priority of his presidency would be to see to it that additional seats were installed in the section currently reserved for the public to accommodate observer delegations so as to make it possible for the Council to meet in its own Chamber. That move would help to restore a clear identity to the Economic and Social Council as one of the principal organs of the United Nations.

Turning to the organizational aspects of the Council's work, he said that

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the Council would address the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly in the areas of the global financial crisis and globalization. High-level meetings of the Council were scheduled with the Bretton Woods institutions; they would highlight the Council's role as the United Nations forum for economic and social affairs and should help foster stronger working relations in an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation.

Recalling that the high-level segment of the substantive session would be devoted to the theme of poverty eradication, which was a critical strategic objective in bringing about stability, stimulating productivity and ultimately, creating a better world, he said that he intended to propose that a series of five panel discussions be organized to deal with all aspects of a comprehensive poverty eradication strategy.

Noting that in the resolution 53/92, the General Assembly had taken note of Council decision 1998/398, he expressed the hope that the African countries and their partners would define their respective responsibilities and agree on realistic and measurable targets in priority areas. In tackling critical issues such as poverty eradication dialogue among the main organs of the United Nations was essential. The Secretary-General had pointed out in paragraph 30 of his report on the work of the Organization that, under the Charter, the Economic and Social Council could furnish information and assistance to the Security Council upon request. He [the President] believed that the time had come to begin giving to the Council the assistance it might request, and he recalled, in that connection, that in September 1998 the President of the Security Council had approached the Economic and Social Council, calling for a comprehensive, concerted and determined approach to the problems of Africa. He intended to contact the President of the Security Council.

Finally, with regard to the dozens of committees that depended on the Council, he said that more coordination was required to prevent duplication and that the problem of continuity in the transfer of chairmanships must be addressed.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (E/1999/2)

The PRESIDENT recalled that, with the adoption of its resolutions 1988/77 and 1989/14, the Council had decided upon a number of measures aimed at revitalizing and improving its functioning; further measures to that end had been adopted by the General Assembly in its resolutions 45/264, 48/162, 50/227 and 52/12 B. On the basis of the guidelines set out in those resolutions, the

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Council would have before it for consideration at the organizational session, in addition to the provisional agenda (E/1999/2), a note by the Secretary-General containing a proposed basic programme of work of the Council for 1999 and 2000 (E/1999/1).

In conformity with the provisions of paragraph 2 (1) of Council resolution 1988/77, he intended to hold informal consultations on the proposed basic programme of work and the other organizational matters before the Council, on the basis of which the Bureau would submit recommendations to the Council at its next meeting. He took it that the Council wished to adopt the provisional agenda.

The provisional agenda was adopted.

Ms. PERSAUD (Observer for Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Council had a key role to play in promoting concerted action by the United Nations in support of economic and social development. The Council had made progress in strengthening collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions. The Group of 77 and China looked forward to the next high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions to be held in April 1999 and to the visit to be paid to the Council by the President and Board of Directors of the World Bank; those meetings would provide an opportunity to advance the debate on the management of globalization, as called for in General Assembly resolution 53/169. The Group also looked forward to the informal meeting of the Council on basic indicators for measuring the progress made in implementing major United Nations conferences, which was to be held in May.

As to the substantive session of 1999, the Group of 77 and China welcomed the opportunity to consider within the framework of the high-level segment the important question of the role of employment in the eradication of poverty and the link with the empowerment and advancement of women. The Group had also noted with interest the proposal to hold five panel discussions on poverty eradication strategies. It intended to play an active role in examining, within the context of the coordination segment, the crucial issue of the implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development, and stood ready to support the Council's important work on those and other issues.

Mr. SATOH (Japan) said that, while substantial progress had been made,

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the Council should continue to build on those achievements if it was to perform more effectively its role of coordinating United Nations activities in the economic and social spheres. His Government was ready to contribute to efforts to realize that goal.

Ms. KING (United States of America) stressed the importance of strong leadership for the effective functioning of the Council. Her delegation welcomed the decision to focus on the very grave problem of poverty within the framework of the high-level segment and noted with satisfaction the President's intention to make the necessary arrangements to enable the Council to meet in its own Chamber.

Mr. HENZE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the members States of the European Union, pledged to support the work of the Council and underlined the importance the Union attached to the ongoing reforms.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) noted that the President had set a number of challenging goals for the Council in 1999 and their realization would represent an important achievement.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.