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Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Friday, 7 May 1999, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. FULCI (Italy)

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Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT OF THE 1999 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (E/1999/45, E/1999/L.14/Rev.1)

The PRESIDENT called the Council's attention to document E/1999/45, containing a note by the Secretariat on the humanitarian affairs segment of the substantive session, and to document E/1999/L.14/Rev.1, containing a revised draft decision submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Alyksandr Sychov, on the basis of informal consultations, concerning the 1999 programme of work for that segment.

Mr. SYCHOV (Belarus), Vice-President of the Council, after introducing draft decision E/1999/L.14/Rev.1, proposed that consultations should be held prior to the humanitarian segment to consider the document that had been prepared by the Secretariat reflecting the comments and suggestions of Member States on ways to enhance the humanitarian affairs segment (E/1999/45).

Mr. TALBOT (Observer for Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, while the proposals contained in the draft decision would certainly enhance the humanitarian segment, a single two- to three-day segment per year was inadequate for the Council to fulfil its role of providing guidance and coordination. Other ideas should be considered, such as those reflected in paragraph 10 of the note (E/1999/45), which had been advanced by the Group of 77 and China with no intention of undermining present mandates or overburdening the United Nations system of humanitarian relief.

Mr. LUTZ (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union agreed to the programme of work as contained in the draft decision. Among the ideas presented in paragraph 10 of the note, the Union found the suggestion of meetings between the Council and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs particularly interesting; however, it strongly endorsed the Secretary-General's point that the United Nations and its humanitarian organizations had a standing mandate to respond to disasters and

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other emergencies as they occurred and in accordance with the guiding principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. In the search for a concrete role for the Council, the ability of the United Nations system to respond promptly to disasters must not be hampered, and duplication of effort should be avoided.

Ms. KING (United States of America) said that her delegation believed that the two-day discussion on humanitarian affairs during the Council's substantive session should be continued in the form of a high-level dialogue enriched by panels and informal dialogues with heads of humanitarian agencies and coordinators. In addition, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs could brief the Council members on specific emergencies. The Office's laudable efforts to launch consolidated appeals did not require intergovernmental supervision. Supervision of humanitarian assistance should be field-based under the leadership of the humanitarian/resident coordinator. The Council's role was to provide overall coordination and policy guidance through the conclusions adopted during its humanitarian segment.

Her delegation also welcomed the continued contact by the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions and with the Security Council. The Economic and Social Council could play a positive, practical role when peacekeeping missions came to a close.

Mr. KUMAMARU (Japan) said that his delegation supported the enhancement of the humanitarian affairs segment of the Council's substantive session in 1999 and was prepared to participate actively in the informal consultations proposed as one concrete measure to that end.

Mr. TCHOULKOV (Russian Federation) said that coordination of humanitarian questions should be a key Council function at all times. His delegation therefore supported the Vice-President's proposals and agreed that means must be found to review the subject throughout the year.

Mr. HYNES (Canada) said that his delegation supported the proposal for further informal discussions. Work on determining the Council's role in humanitarian affairs was still at an early stage; the experience gained from the July session would leave the Council better able to decide how best to support the humanitarian efforts of the Secretariat without micro-managing.

Mr. RAHMTALLA (Observer for the Sudan) expressed support for Guyana's statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and said that the substantive meeting in July might be the right moment for more detailed contributions to the

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discussion. In its oversight of humanitarian matters, the Council should strive to be more precise in its guidance concerning assistance for development. A well-defined approach to consolidated appeals was necessary, with equal emphasis on relief and development. In relief efforts, there should be a policy of reducing transport costs by purchasing locally whenever possible; taking local customs into account, particularly in food aid; preventing catastrophes; enhancing national capacity for rapid response; utilizing local non-governmental organizations; and establishing national and regional strategic reserves. Relief initiatives should complement other initiatives already undertaken elsewhere, such as those directed at the least developed countries, debt relief and sustainable development.

The PRESIDENT assured the delegations that informal consultations would be held at an appropriate time prior to the substantive session in Geneva.

Draft decision E/1999/L.14/Rev.1. was adopted.

LONG-TERM PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT FOR HAITI (E/1997/7-S/1999/170, E/1999/12-S/1999/403 and E/1999/L.15)

The PRESIDENT submitted draft resolution E/1999/L.15, arrived at on the basis of informal consultations, and said that the draft resolution represented a historic step in the revitalization of the Council, one based firmly on Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations. It entailed the creation of an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, which would submit recommendations to the Economic and Social Council on how to ensure that international assistance to Haiti would be adequate, coherent, well coordinated and effective. The process would be transparent and open to all concerned parties. The draft resolution had the formal approval of the Government of Haiti. He noted that an editorial revision was required in paragraph 5; in the second line, the word "its" should precede the word "consideration".

Mr. KUMAMARU (Japan) said that his delegation supported the basic direction taken by the President in his efforts to revitalize the Council. It appreciated the steps the Council had taken in providing Haiti with a programme of long-term support. With respect to the programme of assistance to specific countries, however, his delegation believed that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group must first determine whether the countries concerned were ready to receive such assistance and precisely what their needs were. With regard to the exact mandate of the Advisory Group, his delegation needed more time to consider it.

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Draft resolution E/1999/L.15, as orally revised, was adopted.

Mr. TALBOT (Observer for Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the Group fully endorsed the draft resolution, but hoped that it would not prejudice the outcome of the ongoing discussions on the implications of Article 65 of the Charter.

Ms. KING (United States of America) said that her delegation believed that coordination of United Nations support for Haiti in the transition from peacekeeping to economic recovery was a natural task for the Council, since the complex problems in Haiti crossed the broad spectrum of its responsibilities. In the six months remaining before the end of the mandate of the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti, much work needed to be done to ensure a coordinated and orderly transition and to clarify the role of the United Nations in Haiti thereafter. The focus should be on consolidating the rule of law, promoting free and fair elections, developing good governance, promoting sustainable human development and protecting and restoring the environment. The role of the resident coordinator would be critical. Her delegation supported the proposed five-member advisory group and looked forward to the active involvement of the Haitian Government, which would be critical to the success of the initiative. An effective, coordinated mandate from the Council would provide the basis for continued United Nations support for Haiti after the peacekeeping mission ended and would be a crucial step in the transition to development.

Mr. LUTZ (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the resolution which had just been adopted was both a precedent and an experiment. Haiti could become an example of the role which the Council could play in promoting long-term development in a country in crisis.

Ms. HORMILLA CASTRO (Cuba) expressed satisfaction at the transparency with which the consultations on the question of a long-term programme of support for Haiti had been conducted. The balanced decision that had been reached was good for the people and Government of Haiti and should not be linked to other issues that were within the purview of the Security Council. The Economic and Social Council should continue to consider the general question of its role in providing long-term support to countries in post-conflict situations. While it would be a useful exercise for the Council to provide long-term assistance to

countries in crisis, the adoption of such programmes required careful thinking about the proper role of the Council.

Mr. HYNES (Canada) said that he looked forward to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. In providing long-term support for the Government and people of Haiti, the Council was now beginning to fully assume its responsibilities. Other organs, however, including the Security Council, also had important roles to play in that process and it was important to ensure proper coordination of their activities.

Mr. RODRIGUE (Observer for Haiti) said that the international community was well aware of the economic and social problems faced by the Government and people of Haiti, who were attempting to rebuild their social and political structures and to establish the rule of law. He therefore welcomed the President's initiative in establishing a long-term programme of support for Haiti, which marked a new page in the history of the Council and the first time that such cooperation had taken place between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council.

Ms. FAHMY (Observer for Egypt) welcomed the Council's decision to establish a long-term programme of support for Haiti. Under the Charter, the Council had a mandate to furnish information to the Security Council and to assist the Council. A distinction must be made, however, between the mandate to provide information to the Security Council and the steps outlined in the resolution to provide long-term support to help the Government of Haiti achieve sustainable development.

The PRESIDENT said that, in accordance with paragraph 4 of the resolution, he wished to designate the Permanent Representative of Indonesia as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and the Permanent Representatives of Brazil, Canada, Latvia and Mauritius as members of the Group. The Permanent Representative of Haiti would of course participate at all times in the Group's work. If no objections were received by 12 May, he would take it that the persons he had just nominated were acceptable to the Council.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (E/1999/10 and Corr.1)

The PRESIDENT recalled that the Council had agreed in earlier informal consultations to invoke rule 15 of its rules of procedure and to consider the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its resumed 1998 session (E/1999/10 and Corr.1) under item 12 of the provisional agenda of its

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substantive session. In the report, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations recommended to the Council the adoption of two draft decisions containing the names of newly accredited non-governmental organizations. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to proceed with the consideration of the report.

It was so decided.

Draft decision I

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft decision I, entitled "Applications for consultative status received from non-governmental organizations".

Draft decision I was adopted.

Draft decision II

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft decision II, entitled "Applications from organizations of indigenous people not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council for participation in the work of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights to elaborate a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples".

Draft decision II was adopted.

The PRESIDENT proposed that the Council should take note of the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its resumed 1998 session, contained in document E/1999/10 and Corr.1.

It was so decided.

CELEBRATION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The PRESIDENT said that the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been signed and ratified by more States than any other international convention and it was therefore fitting that the occasion of its tenth anniversary should be celebrated in a manner that would ensure maximum media coverage. The Secretary-General had agreed to participate in those celebrations, which he proposed should be held on the second day of the high-level segment of the Council's July session. That day's meeting schedule could be extended to ensure that the time available for substantive discussions would not be reduced.

It was so decided.

ORAL REPORTS BY THE FOUR VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE COUNCIL ON CONSULTATIONS FOR THE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL IN JULY

Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia), Vice-President, said that informal consultations on the general segment had been scheduled for June, subject to the availability of documentation. He would welcome clarification from the Secretariat on that point. He drew attention to the proposed basic programme of work of the Council for 1999 and 2000 (E/1999/1), which contained the list of items that were to be considered within the general segment of the Council's substantive session of 1999. The informal consultations would begin with agenda item 6, Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, with the focus on basic indicators. He hoped that the panel discussion on that subject, which would take place on 10 and 11 May 1999, would facilitate the informal consultations. Agenda item 8, Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B, would be discussed if necessary. Major groups and members of the Council should indicate to him any other issues that required special attention.

Mr. MANGOAELE (Lesotho), Vice-President, said that it had not been possible to hold informal consultations on the operational activities segment in early March, since the relevant documents had not been available. Following discussions with the Secretariat, it had been agreed that the informal consultations would be held in June, when the documents would be available.

Mr. SYCHOV (Belarus), Vice-President, said that the main preparatory work for the humanitarian affairs segment would be carried out in New York. The Secretary-General would shortly be preparing reports on the strengthening of special humanitarian assistance and the implementation of the Council's decisions. The consultations would focus on strengthening the Organization's role in the provision of humanitarian assistance and on managing the transition from assistance to reconstruction.

Mr. VALDIVIESO (Colombia), Vice-President, said that the Council's coordination segment would focus on development in Africa and on the coordination and implementation of the various bilateral and international initiatives which had been launched to promote development in that continent. Particular emphasis would be placed on implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the



promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

He was continuing his discussions with officials of the Secretariat, the World Bank and other institutions as well as with representatives of African States and of States involved in the promotion of development initiatives in Africa. He proposed to hold informal consultations in May, when the report currently being prepared by the Secretariat for the coordination segment would be available.

Mr. LUTZ (Germany) asked whether informal consultations were planned in order to facilitate the preparation of the high-level segment.

Mr. TALBOT (Observer for Guyana) said that it would be helpful to have available a schedule of the proposed informal consultations.

The PRESIDENT said that the Bureau had planned informal consultations on the high-level segment for the second week of June.

Mr. KHAN (Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination), referring to the issue of availability of documentation, said that the Division was working closely with the various bodies involved in the preparation of documents, and he hoped that most would be available in sufficient time for the informal consultations to take place in accordance with the agreed schedule. Where necessary, delegations would receive advanced, unedited versions of reports.

ORAL REPORT ON THE COORDINATION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL WITH THE BUREAUX OF THE FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS

Mr. VALDIVIESO (Colombia), Vice-President, said that the Council had thus far held meetings with the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Statistical Commission, the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the Commission on Human Rights. Meetings had also been held with the Bureau of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development and with the Bureaux of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund (UNDP/UNFPA). The Secretariat had greatly facilitated the preparation of those meetings, for some of which video-conferencing had been used.

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Among the conclusions that had emerged from the meetings were the important role played in each functional commission by its bureau; the need for at least some continuity in the composition of the bureaux; the need for commissions to convene inter-sessional meetings and, where possible, for planning to be done on a multi-year basis; and the importance of active but regulated participation by non-governmental organizations in the working meetings of some commissions.

On the subject of coordination between the functional commissions and the Council, it was important to avoid duplication of efforts and to promote the exchange of final reports and other information between commissions that dealt with common issues related to, inter alia, gender, human rights and social development. There was also need for ongoing communication between the chairmen of the various bureaux in order to coordinate the commissions' work more effectively. Lastly, he wished to stress the importance of clearer guidelines for the effective implementation of the Council's recommendations aimed at enhancing coordination and cooperation between the commissions.

MEETING WITH THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS (1-2 JUNE 1999)

The PRESIDENT expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the recent special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions of 29 April 1999. The debate had been lively and constructive; the panellists had been of exceptionally high calibre, and the participants had included one prime minister and a large number of finance ministers, as well as the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the President of the World Bank. He hoped that in 2000 it would be possible to allocate a whole day for the meeting. The next step in the cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions would be the visit by members of the Council to IMF in Washington, D.C., on 1 and 2 June 1999. Because the IMF meeting rooms were small, only 30 persons would be able to attend. The Bureau had decided that participants would be selected from their respective regional groups on a first-come first-served basis, although priority would be given to those delegations that had been unable to attend in 1998, because of the limited number of places. Participation would be confined to Permanent Representatives.

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The PRESIDENT recalled that, following his election, he had outlined seven priority areas on which he would focus during his presidency. The Council had already heard reports on the progress made in four of those areas, namely,

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African development, cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, implementation of Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations and coordination of the Council with the bureaux of the functional commissions. He wished to describe the initiatives undertaken in the three remaining areas.

With regard to the alterations to the Economic and Social Council Chamber, he said that US\$ 40,000 had been donated through the United Nations Association of the United States of America for the supply and shipment of 90 chairs needed to accommodate observer delegations. In addition, US\$ 120,000 had been provided by the Italian Government for the purchase of four rows of tables. An order had been placed in March and was proceeding according to schedule. The work was expected to be completed by September.

Poverty eradication was to be the theme of the high-level segment at the Council's substantive session of 1999. Two of the five panel discussions organized to prepare for the high-level segment had already taken place, the first, on advancing gender equality and eradicating poverty, on 16 February 1999, and the second, on food security, basic infrastructure and natural resources as an imperative dimension of poverty eradication strategies, on 23 March 1999. A third panel discussion, on ensuring access to fundamental social services and putting vulnerable groups first, would be held on 12 May 1999 from 3 to 6 p.m.

The Economic and Social Council Web page had been operational since the end of March. He had asked the Secretariat to ensure that all Council documents were made available on the Web page prior to each meeting and that announcements were placed in the Journal indicating how the documents could be accessed. Preparations were under way for the webcasting of the high-level segment of the Council's substantive session of 1999.

Mr. ADAWA (Observer for Kenya) said that his delegation appreciated the emphasis placed by the President on the issue of African development, which had been selected as the theme of the coordination segment. It also supported his efforts to enhance coordination of the Council's work.

Mr. RABENA (Spain) said that his delegation welcomed the establishment of an Economic and Social Council Web page, which would be a valuable tool not only for members, but also for all those interested in the work of the Council. He would be grateful to receive an assurance that all the official languages of the Council would be equally represented on the Web page.

The PRESIDENT said that the representative of Spain had raised an important point, which concerned not only the Council's Web page, but also those of the General Assembly and the Security Council. He would endeavour to ensure that the Council was afforded equal treatment with those bodies with respect to the use of official languages.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.