



Economic and Social Council

Provisional
23 May 2005

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Organizational session for 2005

Provisional summary record of the 3rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 1 March 2005, at 5 p.m.

President: Mr. Akram. (Pakistan)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

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05-25124 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 5.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*) (E/2004/15/Add.2, E/2004/44, E/2004/71, E/2005/8, E/2005/11, E/2005/L.1, E/2005/L.5, E/2005/L.6, E/2005/L.7 and E/2005/L.8)

Draft resolution E/2005/L.8: Public administration and development

1. **Ms. Mills** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution E/2005/L.8 and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus before the forthcoming session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration.

Draft resolution E/2005/L.5: Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi

2. **Mr. Seth** (Secretary of the Council) informed the Council that a footnote reading “E/2005/11” should be inserted at the end of the second preambular paragraph.

3. *Draft resolution E/2005/L.5 was adopted.*

Draft resolution E/2005/L.6: Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau

4. *Draft resolution E/2005/L.6 was adopted.*

5. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) said that while her Government was pleased to join the consensus in connection with the resolutions on Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, it had a number of concerns about the nature of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups and the role of the Council within the United Nations system. Firstly, while the Council had a productive role to play in addressing economic and social issues in countries emerging from instability, it should not seek to extend its mandate into areas of peace and security that were properly within the purview of the Security Council. Secondly, resolutions that merely welcomed or exhorted support for activities managed by other institutions were of little or no value. Thirdly, pursuant to its rules of procedure, the Council should deal with substantive and organizational matters at the appropriate sessions. The Council’s deliberations on issues of economic and social development could be most productively conducted within the framework of the annual substantive session. Any shift towards more frequent sessions convened erratically throughout the year would lead to a decrease in coherence and

informed deliberation and place a needless burden on the time and financial resources of the Council and Member States. Finally, both Ad Hoc Advisory Groups must be clear about their respective tasks and schedules. The Groups had not been established as permanent bodies and should therefore not attempt to provide advice on long-term development or aid coordination. They should be terminated once they had surveyed the situation and issued their reports.

6. **Mr. Cabral** (Observer for Guinea-Bissau) said that the adoption of draft resolution E/2005/L.6 by consensus was very significant. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group had played a key role, first in assessing the situation in Guinea-Bissau and then in providing valuable information based on a true understanding of events. There was no question of transforming the Ad Hoc Advisory Group into a permanent body. Guinea-Bissau itself had no wish for its problems to become permanent, and the Ad Hoc Advisory Group’s assistance was therefore essential if the country was to advance beyond them. The meeting convened by the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, in Lisbon in November 2004, had been an important milestone, affording Guinea-Bissau the opportunity to display its new culture of good governance and democracy. The participation of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group’s delegation in that meeting had been particularly helpful in bringing to light Guinea-Bissau’s specific problems and needs. Guinea-Bissau understood that it was by its own efforts alone that it would free itself from its current difficulties and it would do everything possible to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

7. **Ms. Mills** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed her appreciation for the adoption by consensus of both resolutions. Burundi and Guinea-Bissau needed the Council’s support, and the Group of 77 and China had been pleased to engage in helping to bring about the consensus.

8. **Mr. Mushy** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the African Group associated itself with the statements made on behalf the Group of 77 and China and by Guinea-Bissau and commended the flexibility that had allowed the consensus to be reached. The African Group praised the Government and the people of Burundi for their concrete steps towards peace and national reconciliation, in particular the outcome of the vote on the new Constitution, and commended the

Government of Guinea-Bissau and hoped that the country would continue to advance firmly towards national reconciliation, peace, stability and economic development.

9. **Mr. Hoscheit** (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey), the countries of the stabilization and association process (Albania, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and, in addition, Norway, commended the Council's constructive engagement in Guinea-Bissau through the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group. Since the previous meeting devoted to the consideration of the Group's work, the situation in Guinea-Bissau had deteriorated significantly. The military rebellion of October 2004 had revealed the fragility of the transition to democracy and development and the Group's report described the serious security, economic and social problems facing the country. Improving the socio-economic conditions and the security situation in Guinea-Bissau was therefore critical.

10. The European Union had long believed that security, governance and development were inextricably linked. The United Nations had a central role to play in the transition process in Guinea-Bissau and, in that connection, the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group was a good example of the importance of interaction between the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, a number of Secretariat departments, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Bretton Woods institutions. The Organization should continue to work in partnership with the Government of Guinea-Bissau in order to address longer-term issues relating, inter alia, to sustainable development and governance. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group had an important role to play in that regard and also in encouraging the international community to remain engaged. Accordingly, the European Union supported the extension of the Group's mandate until the Council's substantive session in July 2005.

11. According to the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, poor working conditions and corruption in the army were partly responsible for the rebellion and, consequently, a reform of the security sector was urgently needed. Immediately after the rebellion, a memorandum of understanding between the military

high command and representatives of the soldiers had been signed in order to bring the conflict to an end. The Government of Guinea-Bissau and the national authorities must remain committed to the promotion of the rule of law and the fight against impunity, including in the context of the implementation of the memorandum.

12. The European Union welcomed the Interim President's commitment to hold presidential elections in May 2005 and was preparing a programme of assistance in that area. In the light of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1580 (2004), it also welcomed the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and the promise of UNDP support before and during the elections. The successful holding of the presidential elections would be a significant demonstration of the country's commitment to peace and democracy as well as its readiness to focus on development.

13. Furthermore, the European Union commended the constructive role played by the Economic Community of West African States and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries in Guinea-Bissau and supported the recommendation that they should continue to coordinate their efforts with those of the United Nations system and the African Union with a view to consolidating the democratic process and bringing stability to the country.

14. The decision to extend the mandate of the Emergency Economic Management Fund until June 2005 was a welcome development, since such an extension would enable the international community to continue to assist the Government to meet its emergency obligations and to maintain a sound environment in the period leading up to the elections. The European Union, whose member States were important contributors of development assistance to Guinea-Bissau, agreed with the Ad Hoc Advisory Group that generous and urgent responses to the Fund were required.

15. The report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group acknowledged that there were signs of progress in Guinea-Bissau, including improvements in the areas of economic and financial management and fiscal control. In addition, the 2004-2005 school year had begun in a normal manner for the first time in several years. While those positive developments underlined the Government's willingness to meet the basic needs of the population, the

country was still dependent on external financial aid for, inter alia, the payment of salaries. For that reason, the donors' round table, which had been postponed on account of the events of 6 October 2004, should be held as soon as possible. In that connection, the European Union welcomed the meeting of partners of Guinea-Bissau that had taken place on 11 February 2005.

16. The European Union and its member States were considering several ways of addressing the most urgent financial needs of Guinea-Bissau. For instance, the European Commission was exploring very short-term solutions for the coming weeks and months in order to prevent further disturbances before the presidential elections. It was also considering the possibility of reallocating to Guinea-Bissau all or part of the budgetary support that could not be paid at the end of 2004 and, in that connection, called on the country to put forward proposals on how best to use those funds. In the meantime, it had begun to prepare another budgetary support programme, which could become operational as soon as the Bretton Woods institutions agreed that the country was once again eligible for such support. It was also planning to allocate €1 million to the Government of Guinea-Bissau to help it cope with the devastation caused by the recent invasion of locusts.

17. The international partnership approach advocated by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group should continue to guide Member States as they endeavoured to assist Guinea-Bissau to move towards a more stable and prosperous future. The European Union stood ready to play its part in efforts to that end. Furthermore, the recommendation of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to establish a Peacebuilding Commission resonated strongly with the determination of the European Union to address the frequently observed institutional gap between the end of armed violence and the return to development activities in a secure environment.

Working arrangements for the substantive session of 2005 of the Economic and Social Council (E/2005/L.1, draft decision IV)

18. **The President** drew attention to draft decision IV contained in document E/2005/L.1, and recalled that the text had been orally corrected at the Council's previous meeting.

19. *Draft decision IV was adopted.*

20. **The President** said that, as agreed during informal consultations, he took it that the Council wished to hold the dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions immediately after the high-level segment of its substantive session, on the morning of 5 July 2005.

21. *It was so decided.*

22. **The President** said that he took it that the Council would consider holding an event to discuss the issue of transition from relief to development and would hold further consultations in that regard, including on the possible format and modalities of such an event.

23. *It was so decided.*

24. **Ms. Elsen** (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, although extensive discussions had been held on the important issue of the transition from relief to development, many believed that the Council had not so far played an active enough part in them. She hoped that the Council would remedy that situation in the future.

Regional cooperation (E/2004/15/Add.2, draft resolution III)

25. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to further defer consideration of draft resolution III, in document E/2004/15/Add.2, pending informal consultations.

26. *It was so decided.*

27. **Ms. Elsen** (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union could not be expected to endorse automatically a decision of a regional commission of which it was not a member.

Draft decision E/2005/L.7: Improvement of the work of the Commission on Population and Development

28. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to defer consideration of draft decision E/2005/L.7 to a later date, pending informal consultations.

29. *It was so decided.*

30. **Ms. Elsen** (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Council must take action on draft decision E/2005/L.7 as soon

as possible, and in any event before the beginning of the thirty-eighth regular session of the Commission, to be held from 4 to 8 April 2005.

Proposed date of the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (E/2005/L.1, draft decision VIII)

31. **The President** invited the Council to take action on draft decision VIII, in document E/2005/L.1.

The meeting was suspended at 5.45 p.m. and resumed at 6.10 p.m.

32. **Ms. Elsen** (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union was firmly in favour of settling the matter by consensus. It was not prepared to take part in a vote at the current time.

33. **The President**, recalling that several proposals had been made in the informal consultations just concluded, urged the Council to seek a consensus. If a consensus could not be reached, the Council might have to explore the options available under its rules of procedure.

34. **Ms. Elsen** (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, requested a further suspension of the meeting to enable her to consult with the 24 other member States in her group.

35. **Ms. Mills** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that her group could agree to only one further suspension of the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 6.15 p.m. and resumed at 6.55 p.m.

36. **The President** recalled that the only formal proposal regarding draft decision VIII was that made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the Council's previous meeting, which consisted of replacing the existing wording with the words "Special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development".

37. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) said that it had been her understanding that the proposal of the Group of 77 and China, on which the Council was being invited to take action, consisted of amending the

wording of draft decision VIII to read "The Economic and Social Council decides that its special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development will be held at Headquarters on 18 April 2005", rather than amending the title.

38. **The President** said that the Group of 77 and China had indeed proposed an amendment to the operative part of the draft decision, but it was his understanding that the amendment, if adopted, must also be reflected in the decision's title.

39. **Mr. Leglise-Costa** (France) said that he too had thought that the Council had been discussing the phrase which the United States representative had just quoted, and that the Group of 77 and China had therefore proposed a single amendment to the draft decision, rather than two amendments.

40. **Ms. Mills** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that her group had proposed an amendment to the draft decision, but had understood that that amendment would automatically be reflected in the draft decision's title, which appeared in bold type.

41. **Mr. Leglise-Costa** (France) said that, however self-evident that connection might appear, it should have been spelled out. There was a clear difference for the Council between taking a decision on the date of an event for which it was responsible and taking a decision on a title which had been established by a legislative decision of the General Assembly which itself reflected the Monterrey Consensus. His delegation had believed that the Council was discussing the preparation of the special high-level meeting, which it had the power to do, rather than reversing a legislative decision of the General Assembly, which it did not have the power to do.

42. **The President** said that he had been advised that the meeting would have to continue without interpretation.

43. **Ms. Navarro** (Cuba) said that she had believed that the Council's long negotiations on the proposal of the Group of 77 and China had been conducted in good faith, and with a clear understanding of that proposal's aims: to reflect in the title and text of the draft decision the decision of the General Assembly to include the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

in the special high-level meeting. For that reason, her delegation had been willing to be flexible and to allow its partners time to conduct consultations. She found it strange that at a critical moment in the negotiations, and when interpretation was about to be withdrawn, the discussion was being diverted away from the central issue and being further delayed. She called for all the members of the Council to work with the same understanding in mind and to take a decision on the proposal immediately.

44. **Mr. Vasiliev** (Russian Federation) said that, while he understood the desire to continue efforts to reach agreement, he disagreed as a matter of principle with any decision to hold an official meeting without interpretation into the official languages of the Organization.

45. **The President** suggested that the Council should continue its meeting without interpretation.

46. *The President's suggestion was adopted by 28 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions.*

47. **Mr. Leglise-Costa** (France) said that, independently of the matter under discussion, he deeply regretted that the Council had broken with past practice, namely that, if one or more delegations requested interpretation during a formal meeting, especially at a time when action was to be taken on a decision, that request was accepted. He wished to remind the Council of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly regarding interpretation at formal meetings, and could recall no previous occasion on which the Council had voted on a language-related issue. It had set a regrettable precedent.

48. **The President** said that, while he also regretted that the Council had set such a precedent, its decision had been taken in the interests of efficiency, following repeated delays in taking action on the matter in question.

49. **Mr. O'Neill** (United Kingdom) said that he shared the desire of the Council to bring the matter to a rapid conclusion. To that end, he wished to formally propose amending the proposal of the Group of 77 and China by adding to it, after "United Nations Conference on Trade and Development", the phrase "with the participation of other United Nations funds, programmes and agencies".

50. **Ms. Mills** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that she was not in a

position to comment on whether or not the United Kingdom amendment would be acceptable to the entire membership of the Group. Under those circumstances, she wished to maintain the original proposal made by her delegation on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

51. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) said that, since the United Kingdom amendment involved substantive changes to the original proposal, she would need to confer with her capital before taking a decision.

52. **Mr. Leglise-Costa** (France) endorsed the United Kingdom amendment, the wording of which reflected paragraph 70 of the Monterrey Consensus.

53. **The President** said that the Council had two options. It could defer a decision on the proposed amendments pending further consultations, or it could take a decision immediately.

54. **Ms. Mills** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that she would prefer to take a decision immediately.

55. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) said that rule 54 of the Council's rules of procedure provided that proposals and substantive amendments should be discussed or put to the vote no earlier than 24 hours after copies had been circulated to all members. Since the proposal made by the representative of the United Kingdom was a substantive amendment, her delegation needed more time to consider it.

56. **The President** pointed out that, according to rule 54, the 24-hour rule must be observed unless the Council decided otherwise.

57. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia) said that it was his understanding that the proposal submitted by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China was itself an amendment. In that case, the Council should take action on that proposal first.

58. **The President** recalled that the amendment proposed by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China had been before the Council for several days. The representative of the United Kingdom had just made a new proposal which, under normal circumstances, would not be considered immediately. However, the Council was the master of its own procedure and could, if it so wished, decide to waive rule 54 in order to take an immediate decision on the proposals before it. He suggested taking a vote on whether or not to waive rule 54 of the rules of procedure.

59. *The proposal to waive rule 54 of the rules of procedure was adopted by 31 votes to 15.*

60. **The President** said that, as he understood it, the United Kingdom amendment should be considered first, as it was the furthest removed from the original proposal.

61. **Mr. Ito** (Japan) asked whether the representative of the United Kingdom would be willing, by way of a compromise, to retain the wording proposed by the Group of 77 and China.

62. **Mr. O'Neill** (United Kingdom) said that his amendment had been proposed in the spirit of compromise. It retained the original wording proposed by the Group and 77 and China and respected the terms of the Monterrey Consensus.

63. *The amendment proposed by the United Kingdom was rejected by 31 votes to 12, with 6 abstentions.*

64. *The amendment proposed by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China was adopted by 38 votes to none, with 10 abstentions.*

65. *Draft decision VIII, as amended, was adopted by 36 votes to none, with 11 abstentions.*

66. **Mr. Vasiliev** (Russian Federation) said that he had abstained from the voting because he strongly believed that decisions on economic matters should be taken by consensus, since only then would they have the necessary political weight. In that connection, he hoped that the decisions taken at the current meeting would not affect the Council's usual practice of taking decisions by consensus.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.