

REPERTORY OF PRACTICE OF UNITED NATIONS ORGANS
SUPPLEMENT No. 7
(Revised advance version, to be issued in volume IV of Supplement No. 7 (forthcoming) of the
Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs)
Volume IV

ARTICLE 62 (4)
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ARTICLE 62 (4)**TEXT OF ARTICLE 62 (4)**

It [the Economic and Social Council] may call, in accordance with the rules prescribed by the United Nations, international conferences on matters falling within its competence.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. The material contained in this study supplements that found in the Repertory and its Supplements Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, and relates primarily to the calling of conferences by the Economic and Social Council itself on matters falling within its competence. The material follows the organization of supplement No. 6.

I. GENERAL SURVEY**A. General**

2. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Council convened four Conferences of States on matters falling within its competence. The Council dealt with the Eleventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific,¹ the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names,² the International Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes³ and the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.⁴ The Council further considered the feasibility or desirability of convening international conferences on matters falling within its competence.⁵

3. During the period under review, the Council also took action concerning preparatory and other arrangements with regard to three international conferences not called by the Council. These international conferences dealt with the status of women and drug abuse and illicit trafficking.⁶

B. Rules prescribed by the United Nations

¹ The Council, by its decision 1987/136, endorsed the recommendation made by the Eleventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific to convene the Twelfth United Nations Regional Cartographic conference for Asia and the Pacific in 1991.

² By its decision 1988/116, the Council decided to endorse the recommendation of the Secretary-General on the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names to convene the Sixth Conference in the second half of 1992.

³ By its resolution 1983/22, the Council had urged the Secretary-General to take steps, within existing budgetary resources, for convening an interregional consultation at an appropriate policy-making level, preferably in 1986, to examine social welfare policies and provisions in relation to present problems and concerns of Governments, and against the background of experience gained since the 1968 International Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare, with the objective of setting specific goals in the social field for the year 2000. *See also* E S C resolution 1985/26.

⁴ E S C decision 1988/120.

⁵ *See* Annex I.

⁶ *See* Annex III.

4. During the period under review, the General Assembly took a number of decisions concerning guidelines for conferences and the terms of reference of the Committee on Conferences.

5. With regard to guidelines, by its resolution 41/177 (B), the General Assembly adopted the “Guidelines for the dispatch of planning missions in respect of meetings and conferences held away from United Nations headquarters locations.”⁷ As a general rule, no planning mission would be dispatched to a venue where United Nations conference facilities were located; nor would any planning mission normally be dispatched to a venue that had previously been the site of a meeting or conference comparable to that being planned.⁸

6. The Assembly and the Council also considered guidelines to identify future international decades. By its resolution 42/171, the Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to submit recommendations on guidelines for the designation of future international decades. By decision 43/434, the General Assembly, taking note of Council resolution 1988/63⁹ in which the Council submitted its recommendations on guidelines for international decades to the Assembly,¹⁰ and having considered the report of the Secretary-General on guidelines for international decades, decided to refer this issue to the Council in 1989 for further consideration, with a view to enabling the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session to consider and take the appropriate action on guidelines for international decades.¹¹

7. During the period, the Assembly also considered the terms of reference of the Committee on Conferences. By resolution 41/177(B), in which the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences, taking into account the views expressed during the forty-first session of the General Assembly, to consider, as a matter of priority, at its organizational and substantive sessions in 1987, the possibility of changing its terms of reference and becoming a permanent intergovernmental body and to submit recommendations thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-second session.¹²

8. At its forty-third session, by decision 43/222 (B), the General Assembly decided that the Committee on Conferences should have the following terms of reference:

- “(a) To advise the General Assembly on all matters pertaining to the organization of conferences in the United Nations;
- “(b) To plan and co-ordinate conferences and meetings in close consultation with the Secretariat and all relevant bodies in the preparation of the draft calendar, in particular by staggering conferences and meetings throughout the year, and to avoid to the maximum extent possible the overlapping of meetings related to the same sector of activity in the same conference location;
- “(c) To examine the proposals of the Secretary-General on the draft calendar prepared on the basis of his budgetary proposals and to recommend to the General Assembly a draft calendar of conferences and meetings designed to meet the needs of the United Nations and to ensure the optimum utilization of conference servicing resources. With respect to the proposed departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings that

⁷ G A resolution 41/177, Annex.

⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 2.

⁹ Also, recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980, in which the Council adopted guidelines for international years and anniversaries.

¹⁰ E S C resolution 1988/63.

¹¹ E/1988/58 and Corr.1.

¹² G A resolution 41/177 B.

have administrative and financial implications, to act on behalf of the Assembly, in conformity with the budgetary process in force and with full respect for the mandates of other bodies.

“(d) To determine the ways and means that might ensure the optimum utilization of conference facilities and services, including documentation, and to present appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly;

“(e) To advise the General Assembly on the current and future requirements of the Organization for conference services, facilities and documentation;

“(f) To make recommendations as appropriate to the General Assembly on means to ensure an improved co-ordination of conferences within the United Nations system, including conference services and facilities, and to conduct the appropriate consultations in that regard;

“(g) To monitor the implementation of all General Assembly resolutions on the organization and servicing of, and documentation for, conferences and meetings;

“(h) To monitor the policy of the Organization on publications, with the assistance of the Publications Board of the Secretariat and taking into account the positions adopted by the Committee on Information and other relevant bodies;

“(i) To report annually thereon to the General Assembly.¹³

C. Preparatory and Other Arrangements

9. The Council continued its practice with regard to preparatory arrangements for international conferences in a manner described in the *Repertory*.¹⁴ As in the past, the Secretary-General often was requested to make the necessary arrangements. For example, in the case of the International Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, the Economic and Social Council, at its first regular session of 1985, requested the Secretary-General to proceed with the organization of the interregional consultation on developmental social welfare policies and programmes. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to assist in the conduct of regional intergovernmental meetings,¹⁵ which would consider, *inter alia*, issues relating to the interregional consultation, and further requested the Secretary-General to submit, on the basis of consultations with Governments, to the Commission for Social Development at its thirtieth session for final comments, an annotated draft agenda for the interregional consultation, with relevant documentation to the extent possible.¹⁶

10. As in the past, the Council continued to request its subsidiary organs to prepare draft instruments for adoption at a future conference. In the case of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, some of the substantive preparatory work was undertaken prior to the final decision to convene a conference: pursuant to General Assembly resolution 39/141,¹⁷ the Council, at its first regular session of 1985, requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, at its thirty-first

¹³ G A decision 43/222 B.

¹⁴ See *Repertory*, Vol. III, under Article 62 (4), paras. 23-25.

¹⁵ These consisted of the Interregional Consultation at the Fourth Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs, held at Addis Ababa from 18 to 26 March 1985, the Third Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development, held at Bangkok from 9 to 15 October 1985, the Arab Regional Conference on Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Arab World, held at Tunis under the auspices of the League of Arab States from 12 to 15 October 1985, and at the thirteenth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, held at Baghdad, from 19 to 24 April 1986, the conference of European Ministers Responsible for Social Affairs, to be held at Warsaw from 6 to 11 April 1987, and the Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare, to be held at Montevideo in June 1987. E/CN.5/1987/5, sect. II.A.

¹⁶ E S C resolution 1985/26.

¹⁷ It may be noted that the Assembly resolution 39/141 had invoked the Council's Article 62(3) competence to prepare draft conventions for submission to the Assembly.

session, to initiate, as a matter of priority, the preparation of a draft convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs which considers the various aspects of the problem as a whole, in particular those not envisaged in the existing international instruments, and, to that end, to transmit to the Commission as a working paper, the draft convention annexed to Assembly resolution 39/141. The Council also requested the Commission to report to the Council, if possible at its first regular session of 1985, on the results achieved in this respect.¹⁸ It should be noted in this light that the initiative to convene a conference arose as the draft instrument was being finalized. At its forty-second session, the General Assembly requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, through the Economic and Social Council, to consider and, if possible, approve at its tenth special session the draft convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and to prepare recommendations on the next measures to be taken with a view to concluding the preparation of the convention, including the possibility of convening a plenipotentiary conference in 1988 for its adoption.¹⁹ By the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make the necessary administrative arrangements for the convening of any agreed plenipotentiary conference in 1988 for the signing of the convention. At its first regular session of 1988, the Council decided that the conference of plenipotentiaries for the adoption of a convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances should be held at Vienna from 25 November to 20 December 1988.²⁰

D. Invitations and participation in connection with international conferences of States

1. MEMBER STATES AND NON-MEMBER STATES

11. The Council invited or requested the Secretary-General to invite States Members of the United Nations to participate in all the international conferences it called during the period under review.

12. With regard to the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, the Council invited all States,²¹ and later called upon States to participate in the Interregional Consultation at an appropriate policy-making level, for example, at the ministerial or other high decision-making level.²²

13. In the case of Conference of plenipotentiaries for the adoption of a convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1988, decided that the Secretary-General should send invitations to participate in the Conference to those who were invited to participate in the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.²³

**2. DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

**3. SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

****E Invitations and participation in connection with non-governmental conferences**

¹⁸ E S C decision 1985/104.

¹⁹ G A resolution 42/111.

²⁰ E S C decision 1988/120.

²¹ E S C resolution 1985/26.

²² E S C resolution 1987/48.

²³ E S C decision 1988/120.

F. International conferences initiated and/or prepared by the Council other than those called by the Council

1. PREPARATORY AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

14. In conformity with past practice, in several instances, although the conferences were not formally called by the Economic and Social Council, the initiative and/or arrangements originated largely in the Council. With regard to the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the General Assembly, deciding to convene the conference and setting out its mandate,²⁴ requested the Economic and Social Council, at its organizational session for 1986, to invite the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to act as the preparatory body for the Conference, and, for this purpose, to extend by one week the ninth special session of the Commission at Vienna in February 1986 in order to consider the agenda and the organizational arrangements for the Conference and, further, to submit its report on these matters to the Council at its first regular session of 1986.²⁵ The Assembly also entrusted the Secretary-General with preparatory tasks.²⁶

15. Pursuant to this, the Council, at its first regular session of 1986, decided to invite the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to act as the preparatory body for the conference and invited the widest possible participation of all states and decided further that in the preparatory body all States should participate in the decision-making process.²⁷ At its first regular session of 1986, the Economic and Social Council decided²⁸ to take note with appreciation of the report of the preparatory body for the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on its first session. The Council also decided to convene the preparatory body for a second session, in 1987, for a period not exceeding one week, immediately following the thirty-second regular session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.²⁹ At its first regular session of 1987, by its decision 1987/127, the Economic and Social Council decided to take note with appreciation of the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs: Preparatory Body for the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on its second session,³⁰ and to approve the decision of the Preparatory Body on the procedure for revising the draft Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control.

16. Similar to this case, with regard to preparation pursuant to General Assembly resolution 37/136 for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace in 1985, arrangements similarly were undertaken by an existing subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council. At its organizational session for 1985, the Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women to hold informal consultations in New York, prior to the Conference, with a view to facilitating, as far as possible, the deliberations at the Conference regarding the forward-looking strategies of implementation for the advancement of women and concrete measures to overcome obstacles to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development, Peace, for the period 1986 to the year 2000, and to make available the results of those consultations to the Conference, as appropriate. The Council also

²⁴ Convened in G A resolution 40/122.

²⁵ G A resolution 40/122.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ E S C decision 1986/114.

²⁸ E S C decision 1986/128.

²⁹ A/CONF.133/PC/6.

³⁰ A/CONF.133/PC/10 and Corr.1.

authorized the Commission's Bureau to continue making every effort, through informal consultations, to assist delegations in resolving outstanding issues relating to the provisional rules of procedure for the Conference.³¹

****2. INVITATION AND PARTICIPATION**

****II. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE**

³¹ E S C decision 1985/158.

ANNEX I

List of international conferences of States called by the Economic and Social Council

1. Eleventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and The Pacific.
Bangkok, 5-16 Jan. 1987

E/CONF.78/4 and Add.1.
2. Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
Montreal, 18-31 Aug. 1987

E/CONF.79/5 and Corr. 1.
3. Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes.
Vienna, 7-15 Sept. 1987

E/CONF.80/10
4. United Nations Conference for the Adoption of Convention Against Illicit Traffic in
Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Vienna, 25 Nov.-20 Dec. 1988

****ANNEX II**

List of non-governmental conferences called by the Economic and Social Council

ANNEX III

List of international conferences initiated and/or prepared by the Economic and Social Council other than those called by the Council

1. World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 June 1985.

A/CONF.116/28/Rev.1 (85.IV.10); E S C decision 1985/158

2. International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Vienna, 17-26 June 1987.

A/CONF.133/12 (87.I.18)