ARTICLE 63

Contents

Text of Article 63
Introductory Note......................................................................................................................... 1-2

I. General survey

**A. Conclusion of agreements with the specialized agencies

**B. Terms of the agreements with the specialized agencies

**C. Review of implementation of the agreements with the specialized agencies

II. Analytical Summary of Practice.............................................................................................................. 3-28

**A. The negotiation of, and the entering into, agreements with the specialized agencies

**B. Terms of the agreements with the specialized agencies

C. Co-ordination of the activities of the specialized agencies ............................................................... 3-28

1. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES....................................................... 3-28

   a. Priorities and concentration of effort and resources ............................................................... 3-8

   b. Regional co-ordination ........................................................................................................... 9-20

   c. Co-ordination of activities of the specialized agencies with respect to operating or emergency agencies of the United Nations ............................................................... 21-23

   d. Co-ordination of assistance in cases of natural disaster ....................................................... 24-28

**2. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

**3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBERS

Copyright © United Nations
Text of Article 63

1. The Economic and Social Council may enter into agreements with any of the agencies referred to in Article 57, defining the terms on which the agency concerned shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations. Such agreements shall be subject to approval by the General Assembly.

2. It may co-ordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultation with and recommendations to such agencies and through recommendations to the General Assembly and to the Members of the United Nations.

Introductory Note

1. The structure of this study remains similar to that of Article 63 for Supplement 8. It should be noted that material on specific recommendations to the General Assembly has been treated under other more specific headings. For further examination of these and other recommendations regarding the co-ordination and policy-making with respect to specialized agencies, the reader should cross reference this study with that for Article 58 under the present Supplement of the Repertory of Practice.

2. For a more complete discussion of the relationships between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, the reader should refer, also, to the Repertory studies for Articles 57 and 64 under the present Supplement.

I. GENERAL SURVEY

**A. Conclusion of agreements with the specialized agencies

**B. Terms of the agreements with the specialized agencies

**C. Review of implementation of the agreements with the specialized agencies

II. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

**A. The negotiation of, and the entering into agreements with, the specialized agencies

**B. Terms of the agreements with the specialized agencies
C. Co-ordination of the activities of the specialized agencies

1. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

a. Priorities and concentration of effort and resources

3. During the period under review, there was a renewed emphasis on the role of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in the identification of common priorities for joint action.1 At the same time, the importance was recognized for the United Nations, through the ACC, to “strengthen its capacity to maintain an overview” so as to “facilitate and encourage joint action and inter-agency efforts focused on priority objectives which could maximize the system’s overall impact on peace-building and development.”2

4. In 1996, the ACC adopted a Joint Statement on reform and strengthening of the United Nations system.3 It noted that the organizations and bodies of the United Nations have both individually and collectively reviewed policy orientations, and are redefining priorities and refocusing programmes and activities. For example, at the inter-agency level, measures to enhance programme complementarity were accompanied by “renewed efforts to identify and focus on common priority objectives and priority themes.”4 ACC further identified “strengthening support for development cooperation in the new international environment by helping redefine its goals and priorities and reinvigorating public support for its financing and by catalysing the role of the private sector” as one of several broad objectives on which it intended to focus its contribution to the reform process.5 However, the ACC noted that a challenge to refocusing programme priorities in response to changing demands was the “environment of growing budgetary constraints.”6

5. In 1998 the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC)7 reported a discussion of views expressed on priority-setting and its importance. One view was as follows:

“It was noted, however, that difficulties had been encountered over the years, in particular in terms of the breadth and scope of priorities, which, at times, have been all-encompassing. Nevertheless, it was considered important to ensure that priorities continued to be established as means of focusing on issues that Member States considered as requiring specific attention within the medium-term plan period. At the same time, it was noted that there were also difficulties with establishing priorities at the subprogramme level because of the new structure of the medium-term

---

1 E/1999/48, para. 40.
2 Ibid.
5 E/1997/54 13 Annex 1, para. 11 (g).
7 A/53/16 (Part I).
plan, whereby many subprogrammes now replaced previous programmes. Views were expressed that priorities should be established also for the short term, in the context of the budget outline, to guide the allocation of resources in the programme budget.”

6. Views were also expressed that it was “important to avoid having more than one set of priorities, which might be inconsistent and could send mixed signals to the Secretary-General,” and that priorities should be “established only in the medium-term plan.” “Further views were expressed that priorities were dynamic and could only be changed by the legislative bodies, but, once established, they must be observed in the implementation of mandated programmes and activities.” The CPC decided to recommend that:

(a) “Priorities continue to be established in the medium-term plan, which is the principal policy directive of the United Nations;”
(b) “The priorities, as determined by the General Assembly in the medium-term plan, shall guide the allocation of resources in the subsequent programme budgets through the mechanisms provided for in General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986;”
(c) “The priorities contained in the budget outline should be in conformity with the priorities in the medium-term plan.”

The CPC also emphasized that priorities, once established by the General Assembly, cannot be changed or altered unless the Assembly decides otherwise.

7. In 1998, the CPC considered revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001. The view was expressed that given that the United Nations plays a unique role in international cooperation for development, the overriding priority of development must be fully reflected in the medium-term plan.

8. In 1999, the ACC listed “more selective criteria for priority setting” as a prominent feature of the reform process, and noted that deliberate effort would be required to “ensure that the implementation of the new mission statements benefit from collective inputs, and proceed on the basis of careful programming along clear common priorities so as to maximize productive partnerships around synergies and complementarities.” The ACC also agreed to strengthen, as a priority objective, the capacity of the United Nations
system to make the results of its work better known, engage civil society and use the various channels and mechanisms available through them for this purpose.17

b. Regional co-ordination

9. During the period under review, the Council continued to work toward strengthening regional co-operation and co-ordination and it continued to request reports and recommendations thereon. For example, by its resolution 1996/42, the Council expressed concern at the lack of progress made towards the use of common administrative services, and requested the funds and programmes of the United Nations to work towards increased delegation of decision-making authority and accountability at the appropriate regional levels. The Council also requested the Secretary-General, in his progress report to the Council at its substantive session of 1997, to consider field- and regional-level coordination and resources, to highlight the problems encountered in this context, and to make appropriate recommendations.18

10. The Council, pointing out that the “globalization and interdependence that characterize the world economy have greatly increased the tasks of the regional commissions,” noted with satisfaction the efforts undertaken by regional commissions during this period to initiate reform,19 and requested the regional commissions to continue undertaking their own reviews, and to report to the Council at its substantive sessions.20 The Council also noted the continuing need for such reviews and reform processes aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of these bodies. Similarly, at its 22nd meeting, on 18 June 1999, the CPC noted the trend towards interregional cooperation in economic development in Europe, particularly through the support provided by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to subregional groupings and initiatives.21

11. In May 1995, the CPC considered the annual overview report of ACC for 199422 and the report of the twenty-eighth series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC, for 1994.23 Some members expressed the view that the role of the regional commissions should be strengthened, particularly on issues that called for collaborative actions at the subregional and regional levels. Other members said that the regional commissions must undergo further reforms before additional resources or authority could be devolved to them.24

12. Achieving decentralization and empowering regional commissions, especially in the area of economic development and reform, were declared particularly important goals during

17 E/1999/48 11, para. 47.
18 ESC Resolution 1996/42.
19 1996/41.
20 1996/41. para.9.
21 A/54/16 p. 46, para. 306.
24 A/50/16 p. 47, para. 271.
the period under review. For example, at its 32nd meeting, in 1997, the CPC considered Section 7A, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.25 The view was expressed that “concentrating the decision-making process at Headquarters was not compatible with the need for decentralization towards the field level,” and regret was expressed that “the Secretary-General did not take any steps towards achieving decentralization.”26

13. The Council was particularly active during this period in strengthening regional coordination in the areas of control, immigration, and juvenile justice. Commending “the initiatives and collaborative efforts of many countries and the establishment of regional coordinating bodies,” the Council urged all relevant organizations to strengthen their efforts to cooperate with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in the development and implementation of sub-regional strategies.27 The Council further encouraged initiatives and projects designed to establish effective regional networking to combat drug abuse, and urged those States with expertise to share their knowledge and experience with other States in their region. In the Baku Accord28, the representatives of the States members of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East agreed that “nationally and regionally coordinated strategies should be developed for the implementation of the mandates and recommendations contained in the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session,” as well as “other relevant international drug control instruments.” The member States also agreed that focal points should be established in the capital cities of States members of the Subcommission in order to improve cooperation and coordination at the national and regional levels.29

14. Similarly, the Council called upon all relevant regional and subregional organizations to “collaborate and coordinate their efforts, making full use of the expertise of existing organizations, in examining international migration and development”, and to “expand the exchange of information and experiences regarding international migration and development in appropriate bilateral, multilateral, regional and interregional forums.”30 Particularly in 1999, the activities related to gender mainstreaming, gender equality and the advancement of women and to combating violence against women and trafficking in women and children were welcomed. “It was noted that, in General Assembly resolution 51/65 of 12 December 1996, the regional commissions, among others, were invited to examine ways and means, within their mandates, of dealing with concerns pertaining to women migrant workers.”31 The view was expressed that, "since the Commission had stressed the importance of the issue of regional and subregional cooperation for

25 A/52/203.
26 A/52/16/Add.1 Section 7A para. 71.
29 E S C Resolution 1997/39, para. 4.
30 E S C Resolution 1997/2, pars 3-4.
31 A/54/16, para. 297.
development, necessary resources should be made available for the full implementation of these activities.”

15. The geographic areas under close review during this period were Western Asia, Latin America and Africa. The Council expressed its appreciation of the changes implemented by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (Commission), which have led to greater coordination and integration with regional institutions concerned with regional development, cooperation and integration, and called for the development of the Commission’s role in supporting regional and subregional projects aimed at expanding economic and social cooperation among member states at both the regional and subregional levels. The Council also called for the “reinforcement of the role of the United Nations at the regional level, which entails the promotion of the role of the regional commissions in representing the regional dimension of global issues and in integrating United Nations activities at the international, regional and national levels,” and for the strengthening of its role in coordinating the activities of the regional and national organizations concerned in the region in which it operates. At its 34th plenary meeting, the Council noted with satisfaction the efforts made by UN regional committees in various transport fields to ensure the coordination of work at the regional level.

16. By its resolution 1997/54, noting that “it is essential for the United Nations, in carrying out activities in the economic, social and related fields, to take account of the regional dimension and the decentralization of tasks in accordance with the comparative advantages of its subsidiary bodies located in the developing regions,” the Council recommended that, as reform of the United Nations proceeds in the economic, social and related areas, a clear division of responsibilities should be established with regard to regional activities in Latin America and the Caribbean between the Commission, on the one hand, and the programmes, agencies and funds of the United Nations system and regional intergovernmental organizations, on the other, with a view to achieving appropriate coordination and mutual reinforcement in their respective activities.

17. In discussing the decisions taken at the regional coordination meeting on Africa held in Nairobi on 5 March 1999, members of the ACC raised the need to simplify coordination arrangements and to aid the creation of additional mechanisms. The hope was expressed that the new proposed arrangements, including the broadening of the mandate of the Special Initiative and it Steering Committee, would not duplicate but serve to reinforce, from a regional perspective, existing coordination arrangements at the country level.

---

32 A/54/16 para. 298.
33 ESC Resolution 1997/14, para. 2.
34 ESC Resolution 1997/14, para. 3.
35 1997/11.
36 1997/54.
37 ESC Resolution 1997/54.
38 ACC/1999/2/Add.1, p.6 para. 24.
level, and would lead to enhanced support by the system for the significant efforts being made by the African governments themselves. 39

18. Regarding the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, 40 the report of the Secretary General addressed the "critical area" of regional cooperation, which had not been covered in the previous year's report. 41 “The need to strengthen coordination and collaboration between the bilateral, multilateral and regional and subregional initiatives was emphasized.” 42 Further, the CPC noted "with appreciation" the active involvement of the Bretton Woods institutions in the implementation of the Special initiative, and the resulting enhanced coordination between the organizations of the United Nations and those institutions.43

19. The Council reaffirmed the support for the existing coordination mechanisms at the regional level and the team leadership role assigned to the regional commissions by the General Assembly in resolution 32/197. The Council recommended that the agencies should use the mechanism of a regional administrative committee on coordination, first suggested in 1994 by the Secretary-General, and that the Council should consider providing a legislative directive to this effect. 44 Since “the regional administrative committee on coordination would be a useful mechanism for addressing a number of regional issues, including follow-up to the global conferences and programmes on post-conflict reconstruction developments in Africa,” the “forthcoming meeting of the Conference of Ministers, to be held in 1999, should consider in-depth coordination and collaboration among United Nations agencies operating at the subregional and regional levels in Africa.”45 The Council further recommended that the United Nations agencies in Africa should adopt some principles for regional coordination; and that the agencies “should endeavour to foster regional coordination on the basis of promoting greater exchange of information on planned and ongoing work; improve complementarities among programmes; draw on each other’s competencies; and bring the pool of resources - financial and human - at their disposal to bear on policy issues of common interest.”46

20. Furthermore, the Council noted that “linking the activities of the regional commissions more effectively with the overall activities of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors should be pursued vigorously,” “the active involvement and participation of the Executive Secretaries of the commissions, or their representatives, in the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Group should be effectively ensured,” and “the coordination between the Commission on

39 Ibid. p7 para. 25.
40 E/AC.51/1999/6.
41 A/54/16, para. 570.
42 Ibid, para 580.
43 A/54/16, para 588.
44 E S C Resolution 1998/5.
45 E S C Resolution 1998/5.
46 E S C Resolution 1998/5.
Science and Technology for Development and other relevant United Nations bodies, including the regional commissions, should be improved and made more effective."\(^{47}\) To this end, it was stated that improving coordination of the activities of the regional commissions and various United Nations entities operating at the regional level, in particular the UNDP within their respective mandates and priorities, was particularly important.\(^{48}\)

c. Co-ordination of activities of the specialized agencies with respect to operating or emergency agencies of the United Nations\(^{49}\)

21. During the period under review, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)\(^{50}\) was established by the General Assembly\(^{51}\) to “serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination and to formulate and guide coherent and timely United Nations responses to emergencies.”\(^{52}\)

22. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include in his report to the Council at its substantive session in 1997 recommendations of the IASC on measures aimed at making it a more effective and transparent mechanism for inter-agency decision-making on coordination.\(^{53}\) The Secretary-General reported in 1997\(^{54}\) that in order to enhance coordination and improve response effectiveness, humanitarian organizations have entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and other bilateral agreements to clarify division of responsibilities and to accelerate response in emergency situations. He recommended that IASC should review current MOUs and similar agreements and encourage new ones.\(^{55}\)

23. At the end of the period under review, at its 37th meeting, the Council adopted draft agreed conclusions\(^{56}\) on special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance after addressing the theme of “International cooperation and coordinated responses to the humanitarian emergencies.”\(^{57}\) The Council welcomed the efforts made by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the members of the IASC in order to “fully implement the

\(^{47}\) E S C Resolution 1998/46.
\(^{48}\) Ibid., para. 10.
\(^{49}\) For further discussion of this topic, the reader should also refer to the study for Article 58 under the present Supplement of the Repertory.
\(^{50}\) The IASC consists of the heads or the designated representatives of the United Nations humanitarian organizations (UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, FAO and WHO). See E/1997/98 para. 18. In March 1999 the World Bank was admitted into the membership of the Committee. See A/54/154 para. 3.
\(^{51}\) GA resolution 46/182.
\(^{52}\) E/1997/98 para. 17.
\(^{53}\) G A Resolution 51/194, para. 4.
\(^{54}\) E/1997/98.
\(^{55}\) E/1997/98 para. 15.
\(^{56}\) Agreed conclusions E/1999/1.
\(^{57}\) A/54/3/Rev.1.
recommendations of last year’s agreed conclusions and to enhance the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.”58

d. Co-ordination of assistance in cases of natural disaster59

24. During the period under review the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), which ran from 1990-2000, was in progress. Accordingly, many recommendations were made regarding natural disaster prevention, migration, and preparedness. In 1995, The Secretary-General reported60 on the progress made in programme activities of the Decade. The Council61 endorsed the conclusions and recommendations made in that report. In its Report on the work of its 37th session,62 the CPC recommended that there should be more active support to natural disaster reduction; one delegation stated that natural disaster reduction would be more effective in the context of a development programme, such as UNDP.63

25. At the end of the period under review, the Economic and Social Council, by resolution 1999/63 regarding the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction: successor arrangements, requested the Secretary-General to:

(a) Establish, as at January 2000, an inter-agency task force, with representation from all relevant United Nations bodies and members of the scientific and technical community, including regional representation, to serve as the main forum within the United Nations for continued and concerted emphasis on natural disaster reduction, in particular for defining strategies for international cooperation at all levels in this field, while ensuring complementarity of action with other agencies;64

(b) Maintain the existing inter-agency secretariat function for natural disaster reduction as a distinct focal point for the coordination of the work of the task force, to place the inter-agency task force and inter-agency secretariat under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and to finance it from extra-budgetary resources through a specific trust fund.12. In the same resolution, the Economic and Social Council decided that the international cooperative framework for natural disaster reduction, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General, should draw on the success of the functional and organizational arrangements that were put in place for the Decade.65

58 A/54/3/Rev.1.
59 Ibid.
60 A/50/201-E/1995/74.
61 ESC decision 1995/238.
62 CPC Report A/52/16.
63 A/52/16, para. 298 (b).
64 A/54/497, Chapter III, para. 11(a).
65 A/54/497.
26. In anticipation of a decision by the General Assembly on successor arrangements for the Decade, the Secretary-General has included activities related to natural disaster reduction under section 25, Humanitarian assistance, of his proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. For subprogramme 3, Natural disaster reduction, it was noted that pending a decision by the General Assembly on the content and structure of a successor arrangement, it was expected that the secretariat of the Decade would serve as the liaison and coordinating entity for organizations of the United Nations system, as well as for the private sector, with regard to implementation of the disaster reduction strategy for the twenty-first century.66

27. By resolution 1999/63, the Council requested that a task force be established as part of the successor arrangements for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. This body would serve as the main forum within the United Nations for continued and concerted emphasis on natural disaster reduction. As recommended in paragraph 20 of his report on institutional arrangements for disaster reduction activities after the conclusion of the Decade (A/54/136), the major functions of the task force would be: (a) to serve as the main forum within the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for the reduction of natural hazards; (b) to identify gaps in disaster reduction policies and programmes and recommend remedial action; (c) to ensure complementarity of action by agencies involved in disaster reduction; (d) to provide policy guidance to the secretariat; and (e) to convene ad hoc meetings of experts on issues related to disaster reduction. 67

28. In its resolution 1999/63, the Economic and Social Council decided that the international cooperative framework for natural disaster reduction should draw on the success of the functional and organizational arrangements that were put in place for the Decade. Pursuant to that decision, the task force would be composed in such a manner that due consideration would be given to the achievements of and the lessons learned from the following major components of the International Framework of Action (see General Assembly resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989), even if these bodies cease to exist upon the conclusion of the Decade:

(a) The Scientific and Technical Committee,
(b) The Inter-Agency Steering Committee for the Decade, which provided the platform for dialogue among all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, as well as institutional interests outside the United Nations system, including regional and intergovernmental bodies concerned with disaster reduction;
(c) The informal contact group of permanent missions at Geneva, which ensured an action-oriented dialogue among Governments and the United Nations system on all major issues of disaster reduction after the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in 1994. Inter-agency efforts towards improved early-warning

66 A/54/497.
67 A/54/497.
capacities for disasters will continue to be an essential component of disaster reduction, and will thus be a key component of the work of the task force. 68

**2. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

**3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBERS

68 A/54/497.