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## ARTICLE 64

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## ARTICLE 64

### TEXT OF ARTICLE 64

1. The Economic and Social Council may take appropriate steps to obtain regular reports from the specialized agencies. It may make arrangements with the Members of the United Nations and with the specialized agencies to obtain reports on the steps taken to give effect to its own recommendations and to recommendations on matters falling within its competence made by the General Assembly.
2. It may communicate its observations on these reports to the General Assembly.

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. During the period under review, questions relating to the authority of the Economic and Social Council to request and obtain reports were raised and considered on numerous occasions. As in the past, the study divides its discussion into separate sections focusing on the specialized agencies and the Member States, respectively. The structure of this study is similar to that of the study of Article 64 in the *Repertory* and its previous *Supplements*. The general survey affords an overall view of the trends and features of practice of the Council and its subsidiary bodies during the period under review. The analytical summary of practice provides a detailed evaluation of specific questions bearing directly on the application of Article 64. The section on cross-organizational programme analyses has been deleted because those analyses were discontinued as a tool for coordination pursuant to Council resolution 1988/77<sup>1</sup> and replaced by thematic analyses from 1991.<sup>2</sup> A new section has been added to reflect changes in the reporting cycle of in-depth evaluations.

2. Reports on matters in the field of human rights brief mention of which is made here, are dealt with more extensively under Articles 55 (c) and 62 (2). Special reports and reports requested of the Secretary-General in cooperation with the specialized agencies continue to be dealt with primarily under the studies of Article 13 (1) (b) and Article 62 (1).

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<sup>1</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 7*, vol. IV, under Article 64, para. 16.

<sup>2</sup> See ESC resolution 1989/114. See also *Repertory, Supplement No. 8*, under Article 64, para. 6.

## I. GENERAL SURVEY

3. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Council continued to reform its programmes and policies as part of the effort to restructure and revitalize the United Nations system as a whole, in the economic, social and related fields.<sup>3</sup> To that end, several resolutions and decisions were adopted by the principal organs of the United Nations.<sup>4</sup>

4. As in the past, a major concern for revitalization was the coordination functions of the Council. As acknowledged by the General Assembly, the Council

... must continue to strengthen its role as a central mechanism for coordination of the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies and supervision of subsidiary bodies, in particular its functional commissions, in the economic, social and related fields. It should provide overall guidance and coordination to the United Nations development system. It must also promote a coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields.<sup>5</sup>

5. A new challenge was the creation of a system of consolidated reporting at the country and inter-agency levels, developed around common themes, to facilitate the coordinated review and monitoring of progress by the functional bodies and eventually by the Council and the Assembly.<sup>6</sup> As stated in the annual overview report of ACC for 1995:

This implies not only that coherent policy guidance will be given by intergovernmental bodies but also that the standing subsidiary machinery of ACC and its ad hoc task forces will work in tandem and provide coherent support to country-level action as well as feed ACC with relevant information and recommendations for its thematic reviews. ACC in turn should be able to provide the Council and its subsidiary bodies with appropriate inputs for their reviews of the

plans of action as well as of the common themes emerging from international conferences.<sup>7</sup>

### A. Reports from specialized agencies

6. As in the past, the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies continued to be reviewed. In that light, the function of ACC for inter-agency coordination purposes for the United Nations system was enhanced, and integrated reporting by the specialized agencies was promoted. The Council continued to obtain information on the activities of specialized agencies through regular reports and reports on steps taken to give effect to recommendations of the Council and the General Assembly, as well as through individual reports and informal mechanisms. The Council also continued to communicate its observations to the Assembly through its own annual reports.

7. In its resolution [50/227](#), the Assembly laid out the foundations for an increased interaction between the Council and the specialized agencies:

In the context of the discussions on an agenda for development, a close review shall be made of the relationship of the Economic and Social Council with the specialized agencies. The Council, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, shall provide overall guidance and coordination, identify points of duplication with funds and programmes, and make recommendations, as appropriate and necessary.<sup>8</sup>

8. Upon its adoption of the Agenda for Development by resolution [51/240](#), the Assembly called for enhanced transparency of the operations of the specialized agencies and noted that cooperation and coordination on themes of common interest among the specialized agencies needed to be strengthened. It was further noted that the “effectiveness and efficiency of activities of the Council could also be improved by increasing interaction with specialized agencies, including the provision of regular reports to the Assembly, through the Council, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter”.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 8*, vol. IV, under Article 64, para. 3.

<sup>4</sup> See G A resolutions [50/227](#), [52/12 B](#), E S C resolutions [1996/43](#), [1998/46](#), [1998/47](#), [1998/49](#) and [1999/1](#).

<sup>5</sup> See G A resolution [50/227](#), annex I, para. 36.

<sup>6</sup> See E/1995/86, para. 71.

<sup>7</sup> See E/1996/18, para. 28.

<sup>8</sup> G A resolution [50/227](#), para. 79.

<sup>9</sup> See G A resolution [51/240](#), annex, para. 268.

9. By the same resolution, the Assembly also noted that ACC should

... have an enhanced function for inter-agency coordination purposes for the United Nations system, and continue to meet for this purpose on a regular basis ... to review and advise on coordination matters; ... continue to report to the Council, and continue to make use of small task forces at the operational levels to develop joint inter-agency programmes, as appropriate.

1. The Administrative Committee on Coordination should present the thematic aspects of its report to the Council at its coordination segment and the remaining parts at the general segment; the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination should engage in an active dialogue with the Council on ways to improve inter-agency coordination.<sup>10</sup>

10. In that light, the principal organs continued to focus on thematic analyses received and reviewed by the Council under the deliberations of its coordination segment.<sup>11</sup> Discussions were organized around one or more themes selected at its previous substantive session, and designed to focus attention on the activities of the United Nations system in the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, thematic analyses focusing on particular cross-cutting themes of the coordination segment were the key tool for system-wide coordination.

11. During the period under review, the Council also continued to obtain regular information on the activities of specialized agencies through various mechanisms other than thematic analyses. For instance, it continued to receive reports from the Secretary-General on in-depth evaluation studies and triennial evaluation reviews of specific programme sectors.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See G A resolution 50/227, annex I, paras. 80 and 81.

<sup>11</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 8*, vol. IV, under Article 64, para. 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, sect. II.A.1.(b). See also A/50/697, paras. 36 and 37.

<sup>13</sup> For example, in 1995 the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered, during its thirty-fifth session, the in-depth evaluation of the programme on environment developed by UNDP (E/AC.51/1995/3), which contained submissions, structured interviews and consultations from agencies of the United Nations system, such as FAO, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and WMO.

Furthermore, ACC, in its annual reports to the Council, discussed the work of its newly established task forces and committees to follow up major United Nations conferences and summits.<sup>14</sup>

12. In addition to those reporting methods, the Council also continued on occasion to receive reports on particular issues from individual agencies. For example, in 1995 the Council considered the report of the Director-General of FAO on cooperation in fisheries in Africa<sup>15</sup> and the report of the Director-General of WHO on the progress made in the implementation of the global AIDS strategy.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, in 1996 the Council reviewed a report prepared by FAO, in collaboration with other concerned organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, on agrarian reform and rural development.<sup>17</sup>

13. During the period under review, the Council continued to adopt conclusions and recommendations arising from the deliberations of its coordination segment and transmitted them to the Assembly as part of its annual reports.<sup>18</sup> Thus, it continued to communicate its observations to the Assembly, based on its review of the thematic analyses and other coordination tools.

14. It should also be noted that, during the period under review, the question of rationalization of documentation continued to surface in what the Secretary-General described as a “documentation crisis”.<sup>19</sup> In 1995, the Council requested the Secretary-General to present proposals for the consideration of the Council in 1996 and the Assembly at its fifty-first session, on simplification of existing reporting requirements, taking into account the reports that would be required for the follow-up of the United

Other examples of reports received by CPC are E/AC.51/1998/2 on the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and E/AC.51/1998/5 on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by CPC at its thirty-fifth session on the evaluation of the programme on the environment.

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., E/1996/18, paras. 52, 53 and 61-66; E/1997/54, paras. 23-29 and E/1998/21, paras. 17-30.

<sup>15</sup> See E/1995/94, annex.

<sup>16</sup> See A/50/175-E/1995/57.

<sup>17</sup> See E/1996/70.

<sup>18</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 9*, vol. IV, sect. II.A.3.

<sup>19</sup> See A/50/697, para. 73.

Nations conferences.<sup>20</sup> With respect to the implementation of Agenda 21 and to sustainable development issues in general, ACC, under the active consideration of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, welcomed initiatives aimed at the streamlining of reports to the various governing bodies.<sup>21</sup>

15. As recommended by the Council,<sup>22</sup> other methods for the promotion of integrated reporting were also explored during the period under review. For that reason, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the recommendations put forth in his previous report on the issue<sup>23</sup> and re-emphasized that measures should be taken on the control and limitation of documentation, including establishing a 16-page limit for reports prepared by the Secretariat for the Council or its subsidiary bodies; mandating the presentation of oral rather than written reports, mainly with regard to progress reports and reports that are presented on an annual basis; encouraging the submission of a single “consolidated” report on related topics under a single item or sub-item of the agenda and making increased efforts to consider agenda items or sub-items on a biennial or triennial basis.<sup>24</sup>

16. Nevertheless, the Secretary-General stated that unless a cultural change occurred in the economic, social and related sectors, where the tendency had been

to increase the number of bodies as well as the frequency of meetings, it was unlikely that the documentation crisis would abate. In order to ease to some degree the effects of excessive documentation he suggested that technological innovations be employed more efficiently and work schedules be more effectively planned by the Secretariat.<sup>25</sup>

#### **B. Reports from Members of the United Nations on steps taken to give effect to recommendations of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly on economic and social matters**

17. As in the past, the Council did not establish any formal mechanisms for receiving from Member States reports on their efforts towards the implementation of Assembly and Council recommendations. However, regarding the issue of follow-up to major United Nations conferences, the Council stressed the importance of voluntary submissions of national information.<sup>26</sup>

18. It should be observed that discussions on the level of reporting required continued to surface during the period under review. According to the Council, requests for reports were to be limited to the minimum strictly necessary and the Secretary-General was to use information and data already provided by Governments to the maximum extent possible, avoiding duplication in requests for such information.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22 and E S C agreed conclusions 1995/1, chap. III. See also A/50/697, para. 70.

<sup>21</sup> See E/1996/18, chap. II, sect. E, para. 59.

<sup>22</sup> See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22 and E S C agreed conclusions 1995/1.

<sup>23</sup> See E/1994/88, para. 20. See also *Repertory, Supplement No. 8*, vol. IV, under Article 64, para. 10.

<sup>24</sup> See A/50/697, para. 74. See also A/51/501, para. 9, and A/52/155, para. 14.

<sup>25</sup> See A/50/697, para. 73.

<sup>26</sup> See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22, and E S C agreed conclusions 1995/1, chap. III.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

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

### **A. Reports from specialized agencies**

#### **I. REPORTS ON THE REGULAR ACTIVITY OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES**

19. During the period under review, the principal organs continued to propose new measures to restructure and revitalize the functioning of the Council, enabling it to play a decisive role in the ongoing reform process within the United Nations. In

respect of the duties of the Council under Article 64, those proposals continued to focus mainly on improving coordination with the specialized agencies<sup>28</sup> for the purpose of strengthening the Council’s powers and spheres of action.

20. In addition to the regular reporting methods discussed below, the Council continued to obtain a

<sup>28</sup> See G A resolution 50/227, annex I.

great deal of information and input from the specialized agencies through informal mechanisms. For example, the Council had an intensive dialogue with panels composed of specialized agencies that had chaired inter-agency task forces on coordinated follow-up to conferences.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, as in the past,<sup>30</sup> the main informal mechanism through which the Council obtained information from the specialized agencies, was the continued participation of the executive heads of the specialized agencies in its deliberations.<sup>31</sup>

21. It should be noted that, during the period under review, a new informal mechanism arose to exchange information between the Council and international finance and trade institutions, namely the scheduling of periodical high-level special meetings.<sup>32</sup> As described by the General Assembly in its resolution [50/227](#):

In order to improve communication and cooperation at the intergovernmental level between the Council and the international financial and trade institutions, to facilitate an exchange of views with regard to global issues of high priority and relevance and to consider how the Economic and Social Council and the international financial and trade institutions could mutually support their respective efforts in promoting and coordinating programme activities within their purviews relating to these issues, the Council should schedule periodically a high-level special meeting at a time proximate to the semi-annual meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions with a view to benefiting, to the extent possible, from high-level ministerial participation and the participation of heads of financial and trade institutions and other relevant organizations. A theme and agenda for this Council meeting should be prepared collaboratively, sufficiently in advance to permit preparation and consultations, and the financial and trade institutions should be invited, as and when appropriate, to prepare reports and studies to enhance the discussions.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See [A/53/137-E/1998/66](#), chap. III, sect. VII.

<sup>30</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 8*, vol. IV, under Article 64, para. 13.

<sup>31</sup> See [A/54/115-E/1999/59](#), chap. III, sect. VII.

<sup>32</sup> For example, the Council held a special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions on 18 April 1998, an account of which is contained in the relevant summary record (E/1998/SR.4).

<sup>33</sup> G A resolution [50/227](#), para. 88.

(a) *Analytical summaries of annual reports*

22. During the period under review, analytical summaries of annual reports were not discussed as such by the principal organs of the United Nations.

(b) *Thematic analyses*

23. As may be recalled from the previous studies of Article 64,<sup>34</sup> cross-organizational programme analyses were discontinued and replaced by thematic analyses, as referred to in paragraph 2 (e) (iii) of Council resolution [1988/77](#), to be considered directly by the Council from 1991. Therefore, during the period under review, the Council continued to receive and review thematic analyses on various major policy issues as part of the deliberations of its coordination segment. Those reports continued to be the main tool for the coordination of system-wide activities.

24. As in the past, the relevant organs of the United Nations continued to define the character of thematic analyses. In his 1995 report on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields,<sup>35</sup> the Secretary-General recalled the view that he had expressed in his report to the Council at its substantive session of 1992:

It would be useful to maintain a multi-year programme in respect of themes for the coordination segment. General Assembly resolution [45/264](#) anticipates that discussions on the themes should focus attention on the activities of the United Nations system in selected economic and social areas, taking into account the report of the Secretary-General as chairman of ACC, which should contain a system-wide assessment of the status of coordination with regard to the themes and include recommendations as appropriate. The Secretary-General has been constrained in preparing the system-wide assessments on the selected coordination themes ... owing to the relatively short time between the organizational session of the Council ..., at which time the Council selected the themes, and the commencement of the substantive session of the Council ... The limited time placed at his disposal has made it

<sup>34</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 7*, vol. IV, under Article 64, para. 16, and *Repertory, Supplement No. 8*, vol. IV, under Article 61, para. 14.

<sup>35</sup> [A/50/697](#), para. 41.

difficult to engage in system-wide collection and analysis of data and consultations with the specialized agencies or in the identification of recommendations, which the Council would expect such reports to contain.<sup>36</sup>

25. With respect to the selection of themes, the Secretary-General stated that it “would be preferable if the process of consideration and selection of themes for this segment remained the exclusive responsibility of the Council”.<sup>37</sup> In taking into account that suggestion and based on the work of relevant subsidiary bodies and through consultations with Member States, relevant organs of the United Nations system and specialized agencies, the Council, in its agreed conclusions 1995/1,<sup>38</sup> invited the Secretary-General to offer suggestions for possible common themes for follow-up of major international conferences for consideration and decision by the Council.<sup>39</sup>

26. The Council decided that, in its coordination segment, it should carry out a review of cross-cutting themes common to major international conferences and/or contribute to an overall review of the implementation of the programme of action of a United Nations conference.<sup>40</sup> The Council also decided that the theme for the follow-up to conferences would be chosen at the Council’s previous substantive session to allow for adequate preparations.<sup>41</sup> However, by resolution 50/227, the Assembly provided that the Council might give consideration to choosing a second theme dealing with concrete sectoral issues.<sup>42</sup> Thus, in addition to the theme for follow-up to conferences, the Council could also choose a sectoral theme, should it decide to do so, at its substantive session.

27. As a result, during the period under review the Council selected,<sup>43</sup> on an annual basis, on reviewing possible common themes suggested by the Secretary-

General,<sup>44</sup> issues to be considered during the coordination segment of its next substantive session. As in the past period, the Council reviewed the thematic analyses received<sup>45</sup> on the cross-cutting themes selected, heard statements from the representatives of specialized agencies, Member States and other bodies, and adopted conclusions<sup>46</sup> based on the discussions.

28. In particular, with respect to the thematic analysis on the coordinated follow-up to international conferences completed in 1995, ACC decided that, in the future, it would undertake such reviews on the basis of a thematic approach, bringing together related results of recent international conferences and drawing for that purpose on relevant inter-agency mechanisms supporting ACC in different sectoral and cross-sectoral areas.<sup>47</sup> As stated in the Annual Overview Report of ACC for the year 1995,

The selection of the themes for such reviews would take into account the need to monitor progress in the implementation of conference results and to provide the Economic and Social Council, particularly its coordination segment, with consolidated information, analyses and assessment of system-wide activities in support of the Council’s own thematic reviews.<sup>48</sup>

29. However, when discussing the follow-up to conferences and summits with regard to cross-cutting issues, the President of the Council noted that it would have to strike a proper balance between the specificity of each of the conferences and summits and the need to address cross-cutting issues. Additionally, he noted the importance of maintaining a balance between cross-sectoral and sectoral issues and that no single issue

<sup>36</sup> Cited in A/49/558, para. 11.

<sup>37</sup> A/50/697, para. 42.

<sup>38</sup> See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22 and E S C agreed conclusions 1995/1.

<sup>39</sup> See, e.g., E/1995/129 and E/1996/88.

<sup>40</sup> See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22 and E S C agreed conclusions 1995/1, chap. I, sect. B.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> G A resolution 50/227, annex, para. 57.

<sup>43</sup> See E S C decisions 1995/204, 1995/321, 1996/310, 1997/319 and 1998/298.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., E/1995/129 and E/1996/88.

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., E/1995/86 on coordinated follow-up to major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields; E/1996/61 on coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication; E/1997/66 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system; E/1997/70 on freshwater, including clean and safe water supply and sanitation; E/1998/60 on coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; and A/54/133-E/1999/79 on development in Africa.

<sup>46</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 9*, vol. IV, chap. II, sect. A.3.

<sup>47</sup> See E/1996/18, para. 44.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

should receive special attention over others, thus avoiding selectivity.<sup>49</sup>

(c) *In-depth evaluations*

30. At its thirty-fourth session, CPC recommended to the General Assembly, after considering the 1994 report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives,<sup>50</sup> a schedule of in-depth evaluations that incorporated a drastic shortening of the evaluation cycle from three years to one year.<sup>51</sup>

31. According to the 1996 report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives: “The shortening of the cycle by the elimination of the progress report phase has the advantage of doubling in-depth evaluation coverage, from one programme per year to two. The progress report stage, however, permitted the Committee [CPC] to provide policy guidance on issues to be addressed and methodology to be utilized”.<sup>52</sup> At its thirty-sixth session, CPC noted that the compressed cycle of the in-depth evaluation had increased evaluation coverage without sacrificing quality.<sup>53</sup>

2. REPORTS BY SPECIALIZED AGENCIES ON STEPS TAKEN TO GIVE EFFECT TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

32. During the period under review, concern for appropriate monitoring and evaluation by the Economic and Social Council on steps taken by the specialized agencies to give effect to recommendations of the Council and the General Assembly was a feature of the ongoing process of reform within the United Nations. According to General Assembly resolution [50/227](#),

... [r]esolutions, decisions and agreed conclusions should be implemented and followed up fully by all relevant parts of the United Nations system. This process should be monitored by the Council

and the General Assembly on a regular basis, as appropriate.<sup>54</sup>

33. Consequently, during the period under review, the Council took steps to obtain reports from specialized agencies regarding the implementation of several recommendations. For instance, it continued to monitor the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women<sup>55</sup> and requested information regarding the implementation of the follow-up to major United Nations conferences. This was achieved mainly through a system of integrated and coordinated reporting by the specialized agencies developed around a thematic approach based on common cross-cutting themes derived from the outcomes of those conferences, as well as the establishment by ACC of several ad hoc inter-agency task forces and committees.

34. With respect to the advancement of women, the Commission on the Status of Women received the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies<sup>56</sup> as a part of the agenda for the Fourth World Conference on Women.<sup>57</sup> That report was prepared on the basis of information contained in national reports, the results of the regional conferences and information provided by specialized agencies of the United Nations system.<sup>58</sup>

35. At its coordination segment in 1995,<sup>59</sup> the Council discussed the coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system and implementation of the results of the major international conferences organized by the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. Regarding this initiative, the Secretary-General stated:

The need for coordination is especially apparent when we consider the collection and dissemination of data and the monitoring and reporting of programmes, both by Governments and by the agencies. If data requirements of each of these conferences were to be pursued separately, this would not only be duplicative,

<sup>49</sup> See A/53/3, chap. III, sect. I.

<sup>50</sup> See A/49/99, para. 43.

<sup>51</sup> See A/49/16 (Part I), para. 34.

<sup>52</sup> See A/51/88, para. 5.

<sup>53</sup> See A/51/16 (Part I), para. 54.

<sup>54</sup> See G A resolution 50/227, para. 44. See also A/52/155, para. 45, and E/1997/68, para. 45.

<sup>55</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 8*, under Article 64, para. 24.

<sup>56</sup> See E/CN.6/1995/3 and Add.1-10.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 6.

<sup>59</sup> See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. 4, para. 2.



costly and time-consuming for those who gather information, but would impose tedious and burdensome requirements on those who have to respond to the questionnaires and prepare the necessary reports. ...

49. If data collection, monitoring and reporting could be carried out around commonly agreed themes and goals, on the basis of shared definitions, concepts and approaches, this would considerably enhance the effectiveness of the systems' activities and open up opportunities for joint and shared projects and programmes.<sup>60</sup>

36. In that light, the Council not only identified<sup>61</sup> the key common themes emanating from the international conferences<sup>62</sup> but also defined the broad orientations and modalities that needed to be pursued by the system for carrying them forward at the global, regional and national levels.<sup>63</sup>

37. In the context of the consideration by ACC at its first regular session in 1995, of the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, ACC emphasized the need to approach

<sup>60</sup> See E/1995/86, paras. 48 and 49.

<sup>61</sup> At its coordination segment in 1995, the Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated follow-up to major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields (E/1995/86), in which he offered suggestions for possible common themes for consideration and decision by the Council. See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22, and E S C agreed conclusions 1995/1.

<sup>62</sup> The common themes, identified in the Secretary-General's report E/1995/86, paras. 57 and 58, were: (a) a stable macroeconomic policy framework conducive to development; (b) external debt and finance for development; (c) international trade and commodities; (d) science and technology; (e) eradication of poverty and hunger; (f) access to productive occupational opportunities, full employment and family incomes; (g) gender equality, equity and empowerment of women; (h) basic social services for all; (i) promoting social integration; (j) environment and natural resources; (k) Africa and special categories; and (l) participation, democracy, human rights, accountability and partnerships with major groups and non-governmental organizations. These themes were grouped around the broader themes of (a) an enabling environment; (b) access to sustainable livelihoods, full employment and family incomes; (c) basic social services for all; and (d) environment and natural resources.

<sup>63</sup> See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22, and E S C agreed conclusions 1995/1.

the follow-up to all recent United Nations conferences in an integrated manner.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, it decided that in the future it would undertake such reviews on the basis of a thematic approach, bringing together related results of recent international conferences and for that purpose draw on relevant inter-agency mechanisms supporting ACC in different sectoral and cross-sectoral areas. The selection of themes for such reviews would take into account the need to monitor progress in the implementation of conference results and to provide the Council, particularly its coordination segment, with consolidated information, analyses and assessment of system-wide activities in support of the Council's own thematic reviews.<sup>65</sup>

38. At its thirty-fifth session, CPC "... agreed that the conclusions and declarations of recent major conferences and international events should be followed up in a coordinated manner within the context of an integrated approach, and welcomed the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General and ACC in that regard".<sup>66</sup>

39. Among the methods for the promotion of integrated reporting, the Council made the following suggestion, in its agreed conclusions 1995/1:

In the preparation of reports by the Secretariat for the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, greater use could be made of the practice of having task managers, so that a particular United Nations agency would be responsible for coordinating the response of the entire United Nations system on a given subject, including the formulation of recommendations for future action. All reports should be presented in a timely manner and in a concise format, clearly identifying the issues and outlining options for action and their implications, so as to enable the Council and its subsidiary bodies to take decisions.<sup>67</sup>

40. In that light, ACC expanded its existing inter-agency task forces<sup>68</sup> and created new ones<sup>69</sup> in order to

<sup>64</sup> See E/1996/18, para. 41.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 44.

<sup>66</sup> See A/50/16, para. 283.

<sup>67</sup> See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22, agreed conclusions 1995/1, sect. III.

<sup>68</sup> For example, ACC expanded its existing Inter-Agency Task Force on the International Conference on

enable a particular United Nations agency to coordinate the response of the entire United Nations system on a particular subject. One example of a mechanism established<sup>70</sup> by ACC for the follow-up of conferences by specialized agencies was the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD).<sup>71</sup> Following the Council's recommendation that greater use could be made of task managers, IACSD designated task managers to coordinate inter-agency cooperation and reporting on the various chapters, issues and programme areas of Agenda 21 in accordance with the multi-year thematic programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development.<sup>72</sup>

41. In its agreed conclusions 1996/1, the Council decided that "[t]he results of the work of the ad hoc task forces as well as the inter-agency committees ... should be reported through ACC to the Council in the context of the consideration of poverty eradication and other future theme(s) in the coordination segment and to its functional commissions within their respective mandates".<sup>73</sup> As requested in Council resolution 1996/36,<sup>74</sup> the annual overview of the ACC report for

1996,<sup>75</sup> submitted to the Council's substantive session of 1997,<sup>76</sup> gave information on the work of the above-mentioned inter-agency task forces as well as IACSD and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, and identified policy and coordination issues to be addressed by the Council and the Assembly.

42. In referring to its inter-agency work pursued through its task forces, ACC stated that they had constituted an unprecedented system-wide effort in providing integrated, coordinated and productive support:

In developing an effective framework for promoting integrated follow-up action, the task forces have used a number of innovative methods in their work, such as the designation of lead agencies, the use of country reviews, the elaboration of information materials and guidance notes, the identification of best practices for dissemination at the country level, and the organization of country seminars. As such, they have proved to be efficient instruments for improving the interaction between inter-agency efforts at the headquarters level and coordination at the country level.<sup>77</sup>

43. In 1998, the Council agreed to consider conducting in the year 2000, as a possible contribution to the Millennium Assembly, a review of the progress made within the United Nations system in the promotion of integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.<sup>78</sup> While reporting on possible modalities of such a review, the Secretary-General indicated that he would prepare a report to support the review of the Council and suggested that ACC and its subsidiary machinery could be invited to contribute to that report.<sup>79</sup> Subsequently, in its overview report for 1999, ACC stated that it would keep under review the Council's assessment of the progress made by the United Nations system in the integrated and

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Population and Development in order to focus more broadly on social services for all. See E/1996/18.

<sup>69</sup> For example, ACC established a task force to address the subject of the enabling environment for social and economic development and another task force on employment and sustainable livelihoods under the chairmanship of the World Bank and ILO, respectively. See E/1996/18, para. 46. Later, ACC also established the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and requested it to address, on a comprehensive, system-wide basis, "... all aspects of the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (See A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1) and gender-related recommendations emanating from other international conferences, as well as questions relating to the improvement of the status of women within the United Nations system". See E/1997/54, para. 25.

<sup>70</sup> Established in October 1993 by ACC.

<sup>71</sup> IACSD is charged with coordinating the system-wide response to Agenda 21 (E/1995/86, para. 37, which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> A/51/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 2, and E S C agreed conclusions 1996/1, para. 23.

<sup>74</sup> See E S C resolution 1996/36, para. 3. See also G A resolution 50/227, annex I, para. 81.

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<sup>75</sup> See E/1997/54.

<sup>76</sup> See E S C decision 1997/300.

<sup>77</sup> See E/1998/21, chap. II, sect. A, para. 22.

<sup>78</sup> See ESC resolution 1998/44, para. 17.

<sup>79</sup> See E/1999/63, para. 15.

coordinated implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits.<sup>80</sup>

44. Another issue that was monitored by the Council as an integral part of the coordinated follow-up to major conferences and summits convened by the United Nations was the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the second World Conference on Human Rights,<sup>81</sup> which requested the Secretary-General to invite, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all States, organs and agencies of the United Nations system related to human rights, and to report to him on the progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration.<sup>82</sup> The Secretary-General was also requested to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-third session, through the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council, in order to elaborate a five-year review of the implementation of that Declaration.<sup>83</sup> That report, entitled “Five-year review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action”,<sup>84</sup> was submitted in 1998.

45. With regard to individual reports from agencies, the Council decided, pursuant to decision 1999/212,<sup>85</sup> to discontinue its quadrennial consideration of progress reports by FAO on the implementation of the decisions of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.<sup>86</sup> However, pursuant to the same decision,<sup>87</sup> the Council began a new practice by inviting the Director-General of FAO to transmit to the Council every four years starting in 1999 a report prepared by the Committee on World Food Security on progress in the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action, highlighting its linkages with

the coordinated and integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits undertaken by the United Nations system. The above-mentioned report was transmitted by the Secretary-General to the Council at its substantive session of 1999.<sup>88</sup>

### 3. OBSERVATIONS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL UNDER ARTICLE 64 (2)

46. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Council continued to transmit, through its annual reports to the General Assembly, conclusions and recommendations stemming from its coordination deliberations.<sup>89</sup>

#### **B. Reports from Members of the United Nations on steps taken to give effect to recommendations of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on economic and social matters**

47. As in the past, the reforms of the economic and social sectors that took place during the period under review did not include proposals for systematic reporting by Member States on steps taken to give effect to the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on economic and social matters.<sup>90</sup> However, the Council stressed that the voluntary submission of national information, including, for example, information in the form of periodic communications or national reports by Governments, would represent a valuable contribution for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the recommendations of relevant United Nations conferences.<sup>91</sup>

48. In order to avoid duplication, the United Nations system was requested to coordinate and streamline requests for national reports on conference

<sup>80</sup> See E/2000/53, para. 74.

<sup>81</sup> See A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III. For a more detailed discussion on the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, see *Repertory, Supplement No. 9*, vol. IV, under Articles 13 (1) (b), 55 (c), 62 (1) and 62 (2).

<sup>82</sup> A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, sect. II.F, para. 100.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> E/CN.4/1998/104.

<sup>85</sup> See E S C decision 1999/212, para. (a).

<sup>86</sup> See E S C decision 1981/185 concerning the submission to the Council every four years, beginning in 1984, of a report entitled “Review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development”.

<sup>87</sup> See E S C decision 1999/212, para. (b).

<sup>88</sup> See E/1999/81.

<sup>89</sup> See, e.g., A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22; A/51/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 2; A/52/3/Rev.1, chap. IV, sects. A and B, paras. 4 and 7, respectively; A/53/3, chap. VI, sect. B, para. 3; and A/54/3/Rev.1, chap. V, para. 5.

<sup>90</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 8*, vol. IV, under Article 64, para. 26.

<sup>91</sup> For this purpose, the Secretary-General was asked to prepare a standardized and simplified format that could be used by Governments in preparing information on a single subject or on clusters of subjects. See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22, Council agreed conclusions 1995/1, sect. III. See also E S C resolution 1998/46, annex II, para. 12.

implementation.<sup>92</sup> However, according to the Secretary-General's critical review of the development of indicators in the context of conference follow-up, there was an enormous mismatch between the demand for information — a demand that increased as a result of the global conferences — and the ability of most countries to supply the required information.<sup>93</sup>

49. With respect to follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat prepared, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/100,<sup>94</sup> a questionnaire designed to serve as a guide to Governments in reporting<sup>95</sup> to the Commission on the Status of Women on the implementation of the Platform for Action.<sup>96</sup> According to the 1999 report of the Secretary-General on initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action,

[a] growing number of Governments are preparing reports on the implementation and/or evaluation of their national action plans prepared after the Beijing Conference. This information provides a critical input into the review process.<sup>97</sup>

50. As for the monitoring of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, the Council requested the Secretary-General to base the second report<sup>98</sup> on implementation on “national reports and available analyses of statistical data in the United Nations system, as well as in other pertinent governmental and non-governmental organizations”.<sup>99</sup> In that light, the “review and appraisal has been able to

make use of the 130 [national] reports<sup>100</sup> that were received by the Conference secretariat by 1 December 1994”.<sup>101</sup>

51. On one occasion, the Assembly requested<sup>102</sup> the Secretary-General to prepare for the consideration of the Commission on Sustainable Development country profiles providing a concise presentation of the progress made and constraints encountered in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national level, on the basis of national information received and in close cooperation with the Governments concerned, through a common format prepared by the Secretariat.<sup>103</sup> Each profile was to include certain basic statistical data and indicators already commonly collected by and in use within the United Nations system. They would have the same format and could form the basis for future monitoring and reporting.<sup>104</sup>

52. In implementing Agenda 21 at the national level, the Secretary-General encouraged all countries to continue providing the Commission with information on progress made and constraints encountered.<sup>105</sup> In that light, the Assembly, at its nineteenth special session to review and appraise the implementation of Agenda 21 (Earth Summit + 5), recognized that

[n]ational reports on the implementation of Agenda 21 have proved to be a valuable means of sharing information at the international and regional levels and, even more important, of providing a focus for the coordination of issues related to sustainable development at the national level within individual countries. National reporting should continue.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>92</sup> See A/50/3/Rev.1, chap. III, sect. A, para. 22, agreed conclusions 1995/1.

<sup>93</sup> See E/1999/11, executive summary.

<sup>94</sup> See G A resolution 52/100, para. 37.

<sup>95</sup> See E/CN.6/1999/PC/3, chap. II, sect. B, para. 19.

<sup>96</sup> See A/CONF.177/20, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

<sup>97</sup> See E/CN.6/1999/PC/3, para. 18.

<sup>98</sup> See E/CN.6/1995/3 and Add.1 to Add.10.

<sup>99</sup> See E S C resolution 1990/9, para. 1.

<sup>100</sup> See E/CN.6/1995/3, para. 9.

<sup>101</sup> E/CN.6/1995/3, para. 9. According to the report, 41 national reports were received from Africa, 20 from Asia and the Pacific, 29 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 9 from Western Asia and 31 from Western Europe and others.

<sup>102</sup> G A resolution 50/113, para. 13.

<sup>103</sup> See A/51/420, paras. 25 and 26.

<sup>104</sup> See E/1995/32-E/CN.17/1995/36, chap. I, sect. A.9, para. 108. See, e.g., E/CN.17/1996/19.

<sup>105</sup> A/51/420, para. 27.

<sup>106</sup> See G A resolution S-19/2, para. 115.