ARTICLE 72

CONTENTS

Text of Article 72

Introductory note......................................................... 1-2

I. General survey....................................................... 3-14

II. Analytical summary of practice .................................. 15-133
   A. Adoption and revision of the rules of procedure of the Council ........ 15-46
   B. Some basic features of the rules of procedure of the Council ............ 47-133
      1. Sessions..................................................... 47-69
         a. Regular sessions ......................................... 51-55
         b. Special sessions ......................................... 56-58
         c. Date of session ......................................... 59-67
         d. Place of sessions ....................................... 68-69
      2. Agenda of the Council ....................................... 70-88
         **a. Authorities which may propose items for inclusion in the agenda
         b. Drawing up and adoption of the agenda ....................... 70-88
         **c. Organization of regular sessions
      3. Method of selecting the President ............................ 89-92
      4. Powers of the President and their limitations .................... 93-94
         **5. Limitation of debate
         **6. Official and working languages
      7. Nature of records ............................................ 95-99
      8. Participation in the deliberations of the Council .................. 100-112
         a. Members and non-members of the United Nations .................. 100-103
         b. Specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations ......... 104-109
         c. Non-governmental organizations ................................ 110
         d. Other cases of participation in the deliberations of the Council .. 111-112
      9. Rules of procedure of the commissions of the Council ............... 113-129
         a. Functional commissions ................................... 121-126
         b. Regional economic commissions ................................ 127-129
      10. Suspension of the rules of procedure of the Council ............... 130-133

243
ARTICLE 72

TEXT OF ARTICLE 72

1. The Economic and Social Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure, including the method of selecting its President.

2. The Economic and Social Council shall meet as required in accordance with its rules, which shall include provision for the convening of meetings on the request of a majority of its members.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. During the period under review, questions relating to the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council were raised and considered on a number of occasions. The structure of the present study is similar to that of the study of Article 72 in the Repertory. Accordingly, this study consists of a general survey, which analyses the overall features of the practice of the Council in relation to its rules of procedure during the period under review, and an analytical summary of practice, which summarizes the historical developments pertaining to the Council's rules of procedure during the period and studies particular features of the rules of procedure.

2. As in earlier studies of this Article, certain rules of procedure of the Council based on specific provisions in other Articles of the Charter are examined in greater detail in this Supplement under the relevant articles as follows: on the method of voting, under Article 67; on the commissions of the Council, under Article 68; on participation of Members of the United Nations not members of the Council, under Article 69; on participation of and consultation with specialized agencies, under Articles 63 and 70; and on consultation with non-governmental organizations, under Article 71.

I. GENERAL SURVEY

3. In addition to several decisions and resolutions pertaining to procedural matters that were adopted on an ad hoc basis during the period under review, the Economic and Social Council undertook a comprehensive review of its rules of procedure as part of the process of the rationalization of its work and within the wider context of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system. As a result, the Council adopted new rules of procedure with effect from the close of its fifty-eighth session on 8 May 1975. In that process, the Council also adopted new rules of procedure for its functional commissions and made recommendations on procedural matters to its regional economic commissions.

4. After 1969, when the Economic and Social Council last considered as a separate item the review of its rules of procedure and those of its subsidiary bodies, the Council adopted a number of decisions and resolutions regarding those rules as well as measures designed to improve the organization of its work. Throughout the period under review, questions relating to procedural matters were raised and considered both separately and within the wider context of the overall improvement of the organization of the work of the Council. Questions relating to procedural matters, including the review of the rules of procedure of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, were thus considered by the Council in accordance with its continued obligation to consider improved working methods “which may appear necessary in the light of the experience gained and of relevant developments within the United Nations system of organizations”, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2579 (XXIV) of 15 December 1969.

5. Accordingly, during the period under review, questions relating to procedural matters, including the review of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, were considered in the light of several developments affecting the methods and organization of the work of the Council. In considering such questions, the Council took particular account of, inter alia, the role and function of the Economic and Social Council within the context of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development

---

1 At its resumed forty-seventh session, the Council decided to consider the revision of its rules of procedure at the fiftieth session. See Repertory; Supplement, No. 4, under Article 72, paras. 9, 17 and 19; see also E S C (XLVII), Suppl. No. 1A, p. 5 (item 15).

2 G A resolution 2579 (XXIV), para. 4.

3 As defined in the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirmed in E S C resolution 1156 (XLI); see paras. 17 and 27 below.
Decade,⁴ the expansion of the activities of the United Nations system as a whole and the creation of new organs with specific mandates, as well as the increasing volume of activity of the Council itself and the enlargement of its membership.⁵

6. Within the context of these developments, the consideration of questions pertaining to procedural matters, including the review of the rules of procedure of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, appears to have been determined by the need to improve the methods of work of the Council⁶ and to rationalize the organization of the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies.⁷ By the fifty-fourth session of the Council, the consideration of questions pertaining to procedural matters was determined by a recognition that both short-term and long-term measures for the reorganization and reorientation of the Council’s activities and its subsidiary organs were required to strengthen the role of the United Nations in international economic cooperation.⁸ By the fifty-sixth session of the Council, following the entry into force of the amendment to the Charter enlarging the membership of the Council, the comprehensive review of the rules of procedure of the Council and its subsidiary bodies was considered as a separate agenda item within the context of the rationalization of the work of the Council.⁹ Following the adoption of the revised rules of procedure of the Council and concomitant to the ongoing consideration of the review of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council, the process of rationalization and reform which the Council had undertaken since the beginning of the period under review continued within the context of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, as initiated by the General Assembly at its seventh special session.¹⁰

7. The revised rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council,¹¹ adopted by the Council at its fifty-eighth session,¹² were formulated with due regard to the enlargement of the Council’s membership, the decisions adopted by the Council since the beginning of the period under review regarding its rules of procedure, and a number of other decisions and resolutions on procedural matters taken in various contexts, which properly belong in the rules of procedure.¹³ The rules of procedure of various organs and agencies of the United Nations system were also examined and taken into consideration.¹⁴ In view of the fact that the General Assembly had revised its own rules of procedure from time to time and that the proceedings and requirements of the Assembly and the Council were very similar, if not identical in many respects, a number of revisions to the Council’s existing rules of procedure were based upon texts of the corresponding General Assembly rules.¹⁵

8. In addition to the substantive changes specifically studied under the analytical summary of practice, numerous editorial changes were introduced, not only in the language but also in the structure of certain chapters and rules. The most significant features of the revised rules of procedure of the Council, relative to the previous rules,¹⁶ are set forth below.

9. Chapter I of the revised rules of procedure, relating to matters concerning sessions, provides for an organizational session and two regular sessions each year, as opposed to only two regular sessions a year under the previous rules of procedure.

10. Chapter IV of the revised rules of procedure, relating to matters concerning the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Council, provides that the Council shall elect a President and four Vice-Presidents, as opposed to only three Vice-Presidents under the previous rules of procedure. The revised rules of procedure also formally establish the Bureau of the Council, constituted by the President and the four Vice-Presidents.

11. Chapter V of the revised rules of procedure consolidates the rules relating to committees and commissions of the Council by combining chapters V and XII of the previous rules of procedure into a single chapter covering all the sessional bodies and subsidiary organs of the Council.

12. Chapter VI of the revised rules of procedure, concerning the Secretariat, includes new provisions relating to estimates and expenses that abandon the practice of yearly budget estimates, as provided for under the previous rules of procedure, and require instead the Secretary-General to prepare every odd-numbered year a draft four-year medium-term plan and biennial programme budget covering activities in the social, economic and human rights fields for the consideration of the Council.

13. Chapter X of the revised rules of procedure, concerning the conduct of business, requires a quorum of one third of the members of the Council for meetings and the presence of the majority of members for any decision to be taken, whereas the previous rules of procedure generally required a majority of the members of the Council constituted a quorum. Minor revisions were also introduced in the rules of procedure regarding the conduct of business.

14. Chapter XII of the revised rules of procedure, concerning the participation of non-members of the Council in the Council’s deliberations, combines previous chapters XIII to XV and incorporates new rules to govern the participation of national liberation movements and intergovernmental organizations. The new provisions include an “all States” clause to provide for the participation of any State.

---

⁴By its resolution 2626 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, the General Assembly proclaimed the Second United Nations Development Decade starting from 1 January 1971 and adopted its International Development Strategy for the Decade, the implementation of which was to be appraised by the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council; see GA resolution 2626 (XXV), para. 83, and ESC resolution 1623 (LI) and 1768 (LIV).
⁵See E 9 C resolutions 1623 (LI) and 1768 (LIV).
⁶See paras. 15-21 below.
⁷See paras. 22-23 below.
⁸See paras. 24-30 below.
⁹See paras. 31-40 below.
¹⁰See paras. 41-46 below.
¹¹E/5715. The final text of the revised rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council was later issued as a United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.1.15.
¹²E 9 C resolution 1949 (LVIII); see para. 40 below.
¹³See GA (29), Suppl. No. 3, para. 759; see also E/5437, para. 7(f).
¹⁴E/5450, para. 4.
¹⁵A/520/Rev.12.
¹⁶E/3063/Rev.1.
A. Adoption and revision of the rules of procedure of the Council

15. During the period under review, the method followed by the Economic and Social Council in considering and deciding upon questions pertaining to procedural matters, including the adoption and revision of its rules of procedure and those of its subsidiary bodies, did not depart from the Council’s established practice, as described in the Reperitory and its Supplements Nos. 3 and 4. Developments pertaining to questions bearing upon procedural matters during the period under review, including the review of the Council’s rules of procedure, are therefore studied herein with a view to reflecting the integrity of the process by which the Council considered and decided upon such questions. As set forth below, in addition to several decisions and resolutions pertaining to procedural matters that were adopted on an ad hoc basis by the Council and the General Assembly in various contexts, the Council also adopted a series of decisions and resolutions bearing directly upon the rules of procedure.

16. During its forty-ninth session, at its 1722nd plenary meeting, on 31 July 1970, the Economic and Social Council discussed broad issues relating to the improvement of the organization of its work and decided that members should continue discussion among themselves of measures designed to improve the organization of the work of the Council. In that connection, the Council invited its President to convene informal meetings of the Council with a view to achieving consensus among its members on the subject which would permit him to submit to the organizational meeting of the fiftieth session a consolidated statement of the conclusions and recommendations reached. The Council would then make the necessary arrangements in order to be in a position to take appropriate action at its fiftieth session.

17. During the organizational meetings of the Council’s fiftieth session, in his note of 31 December 1970 concerning the informal meetings he had convened in response to the Council’s request at its forty-ninth session, the President of the Council for 1970 said there had seemed to be general agreement that the role of the Council as a principal organ of the United Nations should be reaffirmed and its methods of work should be improved to enable it to discharge more effectively the functions conferred upon it by the Charter’. In his note the President stated that the Council’s procedures and methods of work should better reflect its functions as a forum for the discussion of issues of economic and social policy, as a coordinator of the activities of the United Nations system in the economic, social and human rights fields, and as a governing body of the activities of the United Nations work programme in those fields, and that those functions would assume enhanced importance in the discharge of the responsibilities the General Assembly might wish to entrust to the Council for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 2626 (XXV). In that context, it had been noted during the informal consultations that certain reforms of a mainly procedural nature could be undertaken immediately and several suggestions had been put forward that covered a wide range of options and in some cases would require rather far-reaching changes in the Council’s practice and procedures.

18. At its 1735th meeting, on 12 January 1971, by approving the provisional agenda for its fiftieth session and the list of items for its fifty-first session included in the draft programme of work prepared by the Secretary-General, the Council, inter alia, deferred consideration of the review of its rules of procedure and those of its subsidiary bodies as a separate item, in view of its continuing consideration of the question of methods of improving the organization of the work of the Council.

19. At its 1737th meeting, on 13 January 1971, the Economic and Social Council decided to transmit the records of its discussions on the question of methods for improving the organization of its work, together with the note by the President for 1970, to the Governments of Member States and to invite them to communicate their views and proposals in time for consideration by the Council at its fiftieth session.

20. During the fiftieth session of the Council, in the course of the resumed discussion on the question of measures to improve the organization of its work, the view was expressed that some of the Council’s difficulties resulted from structural factors such as the expansion of the activities of the United Nations system and the creation of new organs with specific mandates. In that context, the question of procedural reforms and other measures to improve the organization of the work of the Council was linked, inter alia, to the question of the enlargement of the Council’s membership and several proposals were put forward in this respect. At its 1772nd meeting, on 21 May 1971, the Council decided to adjourn the debate on the question of measures to improve the organization of its work along with the proposals under consideration and to resume the discussion at its fifty-first session.

21. At its fifty-first session, the Economic and Social Council adopted a series of resolutions on procedural matters and other measures to improve the organization of its work, including a decision on interim measures whereby the membership of the Council’s sessional committees would be increased to 54 pending ratification of the amendment to the Charter.
22. At the fifty-second session of the Council, in the course of its consideration of the provisional agenda for the fifty-third session, the Council agreed to establish an open-ended informal working group to consider the rationalization of the Council's methods of work and structure, including questions bearing upon procedural matters. The Working Group held four meetings between 5 and 19 June 1972, under the chairmanship of the President of the Council. At the opening meeting of the fifty-third session, the President of the Council informed the Council that, in addition to discussing long-term problems of structure and institutional arrangements, the Working Group had identified a number of short-term problems relating mainly to documentation and procedures, on which action could be taken at the fifty-third session to enable the Council to discharge its functions effectively. Although the Working Group had not proposed to take action itself, it was hoped that delegations would submit action-oriented proposals to that end at the fifty-third session.

23. During the fifty-third session of the Economic and Social Council, at its 1837th meeting, on 28 July 1972, the Council took a series of decisions on procedural matters and other measures towards the rationalization of its work and that of its subsidiary organs. At the same meeting, the Council, recognizing its continued obligation to consider improved working methods, unanimously adopted resolution 1730 (LIII), in which it called for the close observance of its resolutions on measures to improve the organization of its work adopted at its fifty-first session and established a Working Group on Rationalization, inter alia, to review the terms of reference and working procedures of all the Council's committees, commissions and other subsidiary bodies and make possible recommendations on the Council's future structure and methods of work.

24. During its fifty-fourth session, at its 1849th meeting, the Economic and Social Council decided, on the basis of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General on actions arising out of decisions taken by the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session, to expand the mandate of the Working Group on Rationalization by instructing it to review the Council's existing legislative machinery and procedures with the aim of submitting recommendations for enabling the Council to effectively discharge its responsibilities arising from the introduction of the new form of presentation of the United Nations budget and a biennial budget cycle.

25. According to the report of the Working Group on Rationalization, experience at the fifty-second session of the Council convinced a number of its members that the frequency of the meetings of the increasing number of subordinate bodies, the consequent volume and velocity of papers and the near impossibility of producing, considering and acting on those papers were in danger of paralysing the system, and even that the Council was in even danger of appearing to be more concerned with getting through its overcrowded agenda than with dealing thoroughly and purposefully with issues as its role required. It was that situation, and the prospect of it becoming worse in the first review and appraisal year, 1973, that induced the Council to establish informal working groups, immediately after its fifty-second session and again during its fifty-third session, to seek a resolution of its difficulties. There had, however, been wide divergencies of view in both these working groups among those interested primarily in essentially short-term surgical measures, those more concerned with a longer-term reorganization of the Council's structure and methods of work, and those unprepared to support any basic change in the existing system. The result, apart from the decisions adopted by the Council at its 1837th meeting during its fifty-third session, was no more than the establishment by the Council in its resolution 1730 (LIII) of a more formal Working Group on Rationalization charged with reporting to the Council at its fifty-fourth session any possible recommendations on its future structure and methods of work.

26. Introducing the report of the Working Group on Rationalization before the Coordination Committee at the fifty-fourth session of the Council, the Vice-Chairman of the Working Group stated that the Working Group had been unable to submit specific recommendations to the Council. It had therefore decided to take Council resolution 1730 (LIII) as a starting point, to interpret its mandate broadly and to submit to the Council a clear statement of the factors involved in its consideration of the rationalization of the work of the Council and that of its subsidiary bodies. Taking into account Council resolutions 1622 (L) and 1623 (LI), as well as the decisions taken by the Council at its 1837th and 1849th meetings, the report of the Working Group indicated three possible courses of action open to the Council to be decided upon at the fifty-fourth session, as follows: (a) to begin a basic reorganization and reorientation based on the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade as well as on its fundamental tasks and objectives deriving from its obligations under the Charter; (b) to take certain short-term measures without prejudice to what might be required and agreed in the longer term; and (c) to initiate a comprehensive and objective study of how best to improve the programme and organization of the work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. The report further set forth a series of proposals for procedural and structural reforms as part of either of these three courses of action. In that regard, the report stated that many members of the Working Group believed that meaningful procedural and structural reform could be accelerated by the early ratification of the amendment to Article 61 of the Charter enlarging the membership of the Council to 54 and, consequently, that the implementation of the proposed reform measures could be facilitated after the amendment became effective.

27. At its 1858th meeting, on 18 May 1973, the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Coordination Committee and having considered the re-
port of the Working Group on Rationalization, adopted without objection resolution 1768 (LV) on the rationalization of the work of the Council, by which in effect it decided to set in motion a series of measures designed to perform its role effectively as defined in its resolution 1156 (XLI) of 5 August 1966 and reaffirmed in the note of the President of the Council dated 31 December 1970 (a) as the governing body for the United Nations work programme in the economic, social, human rights and related fields; (b) as the coordinator of the activities of the United Nations system of organizations in those fields; and (c) as a forum for the discussion of issues of international economic and social policy, and the formulation of recommendations for the United Nations system of organizations.

"Convinced that both short-term and long-term measures for the reorganization and reorientation of its own activities and its subsidiary organs are required to strengthen the role of the United Nations in international economic and social cooperation and, in particular during the Second United Nations Development Decade, to secure the implementation of the goals and policy measures of the International Development Strategy", the Council accordingly set out a series of decisions on procedural matters and measures designed to improve the organization of its work.

28. At the fifty-fifth session of the Council, following the entry into force of the amendment to Article 61 of the Charter enlarging the Council's membership to 54, the Council, on the recommendation of the Coordination Committee, adopted without a vote resolution 1807 (LV), of 8 August 1973, in which it recalled its resolutions 1623 (LI) and 1768 (LV) on the organization of its work and decided to consider, as soon as possible, amending its rules of procedure in order to provide for the representation of all regional groups of countries among its officers.

29. At its organizational session for 1974, the Economic and Social Council had before it a note by the Secretariat on the basic programme of work of the Council for 1974, in which it was noted that "in the past four years the Council has adopted a number of decisions regarding its rules of procedure". The Note further stated that "the Secretary-General suggests to the Council that consequent upon the entry into force of the amendment to Article 61 of the Charter in view of the need to revise the rules of procedure of the Council and its subsidiary bodies to reflect changes and developments in the methods of work over the past few years, the Council may wish to make a more thorough review of the rules of procedure. In order, inter alia, to incorporate into the rules a number of decisions taken in various contexts which properly belong in the rules of procedure, the Council will have before it a note by the Secretary-General to assist it in its consideration of all aspects of the question".

30. On 10 January 1974, having examined the draft programme of work for 1974 submitted by the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council decided to review, at the fifty-sixth session, in the context of the agenda item entitled "Rationalization of the work of the Council", the rules of procedure of the Council and those of its subsidiary bodies (sub-item 11 (c)).

31. At the opening meeting of the fifty-sixth session, on 22 April 1974, the Council allocated sub-item 11 (c) of its programme of work for 1974 to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Rationalization of the Work of the Council, which was open to all members of the Council and had been set up by the Council in accordance with rule 88 of the rules of procedure. The Ad Hoc Committee considered the item from 6 to 15 May 1974. For its consideration of item 11 (c), the Committee had before it a comprehensive draft of the revised rules of procedure of the Council prepared by the Secretariat.

32. The draft revised rules of procedure had been prepared by the Secretariat taking into account, inter alia, the enlargement of the Council's membership and the decisions adopted by the Council during the past four years regarding its rules of procedure as well as the rules and practices of the General Assembly and the organizations of the United Nations system and a number of other decisions taken by the Council in various contexts which should be reflected in the rules of procedure. With regard to the rules of procedure of the Council's functional commissions, the Council agreed that, insofar as those rules were based on those of the Council, the revision of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions should be deferred until a revised text of the rules of procedure of the Council had been approved.

33. At its first meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to consider the proposed draft rules of procedure chapter by chapter. In the course of its meetings, it completed a first reading of the proposed draft rules. A number of suggestions were made to amend some of the draft rules. However, the view was expressed by several members of the Committee that the time allocated to the Committee was insufficient for an in-depth consideration of the proposed draft rules of procedure, and that the sub-item should therefore be deferred to a later session of the Council.

34. During its fifty-sixth session, at its 1899th meeting, on 17 May 1974, the Council, on the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Rationalization of the Work of the Council, adopted decision 21 (LV), whereby it deferred until its fifty-eighth session the consideration of the agenda item entitled "Review of the rules of procedure of the Council and its subsidiary bodies" and established the Ad Hoc Working Group on the rules of procedure of the

---

47 E/5259
48 See footnote 3 above.
49 See para. 17 above.
50 E S C resolution 1768 (LV); see paras. 56, 74, 94 and 113 below.
51 The amendment to Article 61 of the Charter came into force on 24 September 1973, upon the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI).
52 E/5403.
53 See paras. 21 and 27 above, respectively.
54 E S C resolution 1807 (LV), para. 6.
55 E/5437.
56 Ibid., p. 19, para. (f).
57 Ibid.
58 E S C decision 1 (LV).
59 E/SR.1892 (agenda item 1). Rule 88 of the rules of procedures reads as follows: "These rules may not be amended until the Council has received a report on the proposed amendment from a committee of the Council."
60 E/AC.60/SR.1-9.
61 E/5450, annexes I and II.
62 See footnote 13 above.
63 E/5450, para. 7. See para. 120 below.
64 E/5515, para. 29, and E/AC.60/SR.1-9.
65 E/5515, para. 50.
Council and its subsidiary bodies to examine and report to
the Council at its fifty-eighth session on the item.66
35. At its fifty-seventh session, the Economic and Social
Council adopted a series of decisions and resolutions on
procedural matters and other measures towards the ratio-
nalization of its work,67 including resolution 1907 (LVII)
of 2 August 1974 on a revised pattern of meetings, request-
ing the Secretary-General to present to the Council at its
organizational session for 1975 a report containing recom-
mendations to that end, together with an assessment of
their possible financial implications.68
36. Subsequently, by its resolution 3341 (XXIX) of 14
December 1974, the General Assembly reaffirmed the con-
viction expressed in Council resolution 1768 (LIV)69 and
stated that:
"the Economic and Social Council, in order to dis-
charge all its responsibilities, particularly those of coor-
dination, in a satisfactory manner, should reorganize its
work in such a way as to enable the Council to face up to
the new emerging challenges which require urgent, effi-
cient and well-coordinated attention and action on the
part of the United Nations system".70
In the same resolution, the Assembly also reaffirmed the
objectives of Council resolution 1907 (LVII)71 concerning
the revised pattern of meetings and requested the Council
to undertake a number of steps to further rationalize its
work.72
37. The Economic and Social Council resumed its con-
sideration of the question of the review of its rules of pro-
cedure, within the context of the rationalization of its
work, at its organizational session for 1975 and its
fifty-eighth session. During its organizational meetings,
the Council conducted informal consultations on certain
questions arising out of the report submitted by the Secreta-
tariat on the rationalization of the work of the Council73
pursuant to Council resolution 1907 (LVII)74 and heard
statements by the Secretary of the Council concerning the
financial implications of some of the proposals made in the
course of the discussion.75 At its 1937th meeting, on 15
January 1975, the Council took a series of decisions on
procedural matters and other measures designed to im-
prove the organization of the work of the Council and its
subsidiary bodies.76
38. At the opening meeting of the fifty-eighth session,
the Economic and Social Council decided to set up for the
duration of the session an informal consultative working
group open to all members of the Council to facilitate the
consideration of the draft revised rules of procedure, as
contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on
the rules of procedure of the Council and its subsidiary
bodies,77 with a view to arriving at a generally agreed text
which could then be approved by the Council.78
39. As a result of the informal consultations,79 the Eco-

35. See para. 27 above.
36. See para. 35 above.
37. G A resolution 3341 (XXIX), para. 1.
38. See supra. 35 above.
39. See para. 35 above.
41. E/5634. The Ad Hoc Working Group held two sessions in 1975,
from 27 to 31 January and 3 to 7 March. Owing to lack of time, the
Working Group could only proceed with a first reading of the proposed
revised rules of procedure submitted by the Secretariat (E/5450).
E/5634, paras. 1 and 4.
42. See E/SR.1940, para. 12.
43. The Council held informal consultations from 9 April to 6 May
1975.
44. E/L.1663.
45. E/5677, annex.
46. See para. 27 above.
47. G A resolution 1949 (LVIII), para. 1.
48. Ibid., annex. The final text of the revised rules of procedure of the
Council was issued as document E/5715 and later published as a United
Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.115.
49. E/SR.1949 (LVIII), para. 3.
50. Ibid., para. 4.
51. G A resolution 3362 (S-VII); see also resolution 2626 (XXV) and
this Supplement, under Article 55.
52. See para. 27 above.
53. See para. 36 above.
54. G A resolution 3362 (S-VII), sect. VII.
At its 106th plenary meeting, on 21 December 1976, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to continue, as envisaged in section VII of resolution 3362 (S-VII), of 16 September 1975, the process of rationalization and reform which it had undertaken in accordance with Council resolution 1768 (LIV) of 18 May 1973 and General Assembly resolution 3341 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974.

At its organizational session for 1977, in connection with the agenda item entitled "Rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council", the Economic and Social Council had before it a note by the Secretariat containing the text of the draft revised rules of procedure of the functional commissions, as requested by the Council in its decision 153 (LX) of 14 May 1976. At its 2041st plenary meeting, on 13 January 1977, the Council decided to review the rules of procedure of its functional commission at its sixty-second session in the context of the agenda item entitled "Restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system".

Subsequently, by its resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977, the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Restructuring of the United Nations System, pursuant to Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII), including certain measures to be adopted by the Council on procedural matters. At its first regular session, in 1978, the Economic and Social Council took note of the report by the Secretary-General entitled "Implementation of the conclusions and recommendations annexed to General Assembly resolution 32/197".

B. Some basic features of the rules of procedure of the Council

I. SESSIONS

During its fifty-seventh session, following several developments since the beginning of the period under review, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1907 (L VII) by which, having noted the difficulties experienced in dealing with its workload within the existing arrangements for meetings, it decided, in light of rules 4 and 5 of the rules of procedure of the Council, governing the convening of special sessions, that the Council's pattern of meetings, in addition to making provision for the regular sessions, should take into full account the need for a better distribution throughout the year of questions included in the Council's programme of work for each year. The Secretary-General was requested to present to the Council, at its organizational session for 1975, a report containing recommendations to that end, together with an assessment of their possible financial implications.

48. According to the report of the Secretariat on the rationalization of the work of the Economic and Social Council, submitted to the Council at its organizational session for 1975, the main intention of the Council in its resolution 1907 (L VII) concerning the revision of its pattern of meetings was twofold: to enable it to make more flexible use of rules 4 and 5 of its rules of procedure concerning the convening of special sessions, and to ensure a more effective consideration of all the questions included in its programme of work through the introduction of changes into the organization of the Council's regular sessions.

49. Subsequently, by resolution 32/197, the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System, including the recommendation that the Economic and Social Council should organize its work on a biennial basis and provide for shorter but more frequent subject-oriented sessions spread throughout the year, except when the General Assembly was in session. Such sessions of the Council should be scheduled for the purpose, inter alia, of considering action by the United Nations system in particular sectors, reviewing the results of technical work undertaken in specialized bodies and establishing guidelines for such work, reviewing programme budgets and medium-term plans within the United Nations system, and recommending policy guidelines for operational activities. The Council should identify subject areas on which such sessions should be held. It was also recommended that the Council might, in modification of its programme, decide on ad hoc arrangements, including in particular the convening of special sessions, to deal with emerging problems meriting special or urgent international attention. Furthermore, at such times as might be decided upon by its members, the Council should also hold periodic meetings, at the ministerial or other sufficiently high level, to review major issues in the world economic and social situation. Such meetings should be prepared effectively and should concentrate on important policy areas justifying high-level participation.
50. While the Economic and Social Council took note of progress reports issued by the Administrative Committee on Coordination and by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations annexed to General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system,112 no action was taken by the Council within the period under review on the specific recommendations contained therein.

a. Regular sessions

51. By its resolution 1623 (LI) of 30 July 1971,113 taking into account its existing rules of procedure according to which the Economic and Social Council “shall normally hold two regular sessions a year”,114 the Council decided to arrange its programme of work to provide for a short organizational session two regular sessions, and a brief resumed session.

52. During its fifty-seventh session, the Economic and Social Council decided to adopt, on an experimental basis, a biennial cycle of meetings, and for that purpose, with effect from its fifty-ninth session, to approve its programme of meetings for a period of two years.115 By its resolution 1907 (LVII) of 5 August 1974, reaffirming its conviction that both short-term and long-term measures were required to strengthen the role of the United Nations in international economic and social cooperation,116 the Council decided that its pattern of meetings, in addition to making provision for the regular spring and summer sessions, should take into full account the need for a better distribution throughout the year of the questions included in its programme of work for each year.117 With a view to such a better distribution of meetings and a more effective operation, the Council further decided that the Secretary-General should be requested to present to it at its organizational session for 1975 a report containing recommendations to that end.118

53. Subsequently, by its resolution 3341 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make specific recommendations as regards the logistical support that the Council required in the light of its current workload, including, in addition to the regular sessions of the Council, the possibility of arrangements for meetings of the Council to be convened as necessary throughout the year.119 The General Assembly further requested the Economic and Social Council at its organizational session for 1975 to take the necessary action allowing the Council to carry out its work in 1975 in the most efficient way possible, “if necessary by convening inter-sessional meetings”.120

54. In its report on the rationalization of the work of the Economic and Social Council pursuant to Council resolution 1907 (LVII), the Secretariat recommended to the Council to increase the number of daily meetings at the regular sessions of the Council so as to enable three ses-

sional bodies to function simultaneously, and to discontinue the resumed sessions of the Council during the second half of the year owing to the difficulties deriving from the practice of the Council of holding meetings when the General Assembly was in session.121 On the basis of the recommendations of the Secretariat, the Council decided to increase from four to six the number of daily meetings at its fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions, in order that it might hold simultaneously two formal meetings and one informal meeting for consultations or other purposes.122 The Council also decided to hold a resumed session during the second half of 1975 for the sole purpose of considering the annual report of the Trade and Development Board, in effect abandoning the practice of resuming its second regular session during the regular session of the General Assembly.123

55. Subsequently, by its resolution 1949 (LVIII), of 8 May 1975, the Economic and Social Council further revised rule 1 of the revised text of its rules of procedure, concerning organizational and regular sessions, adopted on the basis of the note by the Secretariat on the review of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies,124 to take into account the provisions of Council resolution 1623 (LI),125 providing that “the Council shall normally hold an organizational session and two regular sessions each year”.126

b. Special sessions

56. By its resolution 1768 (LIV) of 18 May 1973 on the rationalization of the work of the Economic and Social Council, calling for both short-term and long-term measures for the reorganization and reorientation of its activities and subsidiary organs, the Council expressly recalled, in relation to its continuing functions, that it might be convened at any time in special session under Article 72, paragraph 2, of the Charter and in accordance with rules 4 and 5 of its rules of procedure.

57. By its resolution 3202 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974, the General Assembly decided that, for the purpose of examining the progress reports of organizations within the United Nations system as a matter of urgency within the context of the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, the Economic and Social Council “may be convened, as necessary, in special sessions or, if need be, may function continuously”.127

58. However, in its report on the rationalization of the work of the Economic and Social Council pursuant to Council resolution 1907 (LVII),128 the Secretariat identified a number of difficulties raised by the suggestion to apply the notion of “continuous” sessions (as used in practice by the Security Council) to the Economic and Social Council.129 The Secretariat therefore recommended to the Council a more flexible application of rules 4 and 5 of its rules of procedure concerning special sessions in order to consider emerging situations of international concern and spe-
pecific questions on the Council’s agenda. It was suggested that, in addition to changing the pattern of meetings at the regular sessions, the Council should adopt a mechanism designed to enable itself to meet outside the framework of its regular sessions as and when this was deemed to be required. Under such mechanism of “continuous” or “intermittent” sessions, the Council could be convened within a relatively short time to consider a specific problem affecting international economic relations, without disrupting its normal work, without overloading its regular sessions and, given the nature of that kind of “special” or “intermittent” session, without raising conflicts of duplication and overlapping with meetings of other organs dealing with related questions. Specifically, the Secretariat suggested that the convening of a special session of the Council or one of its committees could be agreed upon at the organizational session or at the first regular session of the year. If such a proposal were made during the inter-sessional periods, consultations would be held with a view to ascertaining that it was broadly supported and that the required conference facilities would be available; then, if there was general agreement that a special session should be held, the Council or one of its committees would be convened in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure. However, no substantial revision was made to rules 4 and 5 of the rules of procedure of the Council and the specific suggestions brought forward by the Secretariat pursuant to Council resolution 1907 (LVII) were not taken up by the Council in the course of the review of its rules of procedure.

c. Date of sessions

59. Prior to the period under review, at its 1647th meeting, on 17 November 1969, the Economic and Social Council had decided, inter alia, to adopt, on a provisional basis, the Secretary-General’s proposal for the amendment of rule 2 of the rules of procedure of the Council concerning the dates of sessions. The provisionally adopted rule provided that:

“each regular session of the Council shall be held at a date fixed by the Council at a previous session. The first regular session of the year shall begin with a brief series of organizational meetings early in January and shall be reopened in March and resumed in May. The date of the second regular session of the year shall be fixed as late administratively practicable before the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly, and shall be adjourned at least six weeks before it. This session shall be resumed during the regular session of the General Assembly for a brief series of meetings.”

60. Subsequently, at its 1722nd meeting, on 31 July 1970, the Economic and Social Council decided to continue the practice of holding its spring session in two parts. The first regular session of 1971 and of following years was accordingly held over one uninterrupted period of time.

61. By its resolution 1623 (LI) of 30 July 1971, the Council decided to arrange its programme of work to provide for: (a) a short organizational session in January; (b) a session in the second quarter of the calendar year; (c) a session in the third quarter of the calendar year; and (d) a brief resumed session during the session of the General Assembly.

62. At its 1837th plenary meeting, on 28 July 1972, the Economic and Social Council took a number of decisions on the rationalization of its work and that of its subsidiary organs. For the purpose of enabling its subsidiary and associated organs to conform their meetings to the Council’s own schedule of meetings, the Council decided that, starting in 1974, its first regular session should begin on the second Tuesday of April and its second regular session on the first Wednesday of July.

63. In its note of 11 April 1974 on the review of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, the Secretariat’s proposed revision to rule 2 of the rules of procedure took into account the Council’s decision taken at its 1837th meeting. Accordingly, the proposed new rule 2 concerning the dates of the convening and adjournment of sessions provided that, “subject to rule 3, the organizational session shall be convened on the second Monday in January, the first regular session on the second Tuesday in April, and the second regular session on the first Wednesday in July. The second regular session shall be adjourned at least six weeks before the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly”,

64. Taking into account the view expressed by the Secretariat regarding the arrangement of the meetings schedule for the organizational session of the Council, rule 2 of the revised text of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council concerning dates of the convening and adjournment of sessions, as adopted by the Council in its resolution 1949 (LVIII) of 8 May 1975, provides that:

“subject to rule 3, the organizational session shall be convened on the second Tuesday in January, the first regular session on the second Tuesday in April, and the second regular session on the first Wednesday in July. The second regular session shall be adjourned at least six weeks before the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly.”

65. Rule 6 of the revised text of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council concerning the notification of the opening date of sessions, as adopted by the Council in its resolution 1949 (LVIII), provides for the situation where a special session is requested by either the General Assembly or the Security Council, and not just by the latter as provided for under rule 7 of the previous rules of procedure, in which case the President of the Council may reduce the period of notice of the date of the opening of the session to not less than eight days.

66. During its organizational session for 1976, at its 1984th meeting, on 15 January, the Economic and Social Council...
Council decided to hold its sixty-first session (summer session) in two parts and, for that purpose, to suspend rule 2 of its rules of procedure concerning dates of convening and adjournment.144

67. At its 38th plenary meeting, on 4 August 1978, the Economic and Social Council decided that in order to ensure better preparation for its organizational sessions, those sessions should in future be convened on the first Tuesday in February, not in January, and that rule 2 of the rules of procedure of the Council should be amended accordingly.145

d. Place of sessions

68. By its resolution 3350 (XXIX) of 18 December 1974 on the inclusion of Vienna in the pattern of conferences, the General Assembly approved the recommendation contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the pattern of conferences of the United Nations and the possibilities for a more rational and economic use of its resources,146 to the effect that certain Headquarters-based bodies which were authorized under the provisions of resolution 3350 (XXIX) to meet in Geneva, including the Economic and Social Council, its subsidiary bodies and its functional commissions, might also meet in Vienna for the period 1975-1977.147

69. During its organizational session for 1976, at the 1984th plenary meeting, the Council decided to accept the invitation of the Government of the Ivory Coast to hold the first part of its sixty-first session at Abidjan, in plenary meetings at the ministerial or higher level, and to hold the second part of the session at Geneva.148 During its sixty-sixth session, at the 2005th meeting, on 14 May 1976, the Council decided to convene the first part of its sixty-first session of the Council at Abidjan on 30 June 1976.149

2. AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL

**a. Authorities which may propose items for inclusion in the agenda

b. Drawing up and adoption of the agenda

70. Prior to the period under review, at its 1647th meeting, on 17 November 1969, the Economic and Social Council had decided to adopt, on a provisional basis, the Secretary-General’s proposal150 for the amendment of rule 14, paragraph 1, of the rules of procedure of the Council concerning the adoption of the agenda.151 The provisionally adopted rule provided that:

“subject to the provisions of rule 17 and after the election of officers when required under rule 20, the Council shall each year adopt its agenda for the session on the basis of the provisional agenda and the supplementary list referred to in rule 13, (a) adopt the agenda for the organizational meetings at those meetings; (b) adopt the agenda for the remainder of the first regular session when the session re-opens; and (c) adopt the agenda for the second regular session at the beginning of that session”.152

71. At its 1722nd meeting, on 31 July 1970, the Economic and Social Council considered the question of the application of rule 14, para. 4, of its rules of procedure, according to which “the Council shall normally include in its agenda for the session only items for which adequate documentation has been circulated to members six weeks before the beginning of the session of the Council”.153 The Council had before it the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, on the basis of which it decided to adopt the following position:154

Taking note of the conclusion of the Joint Inspection Unit according to which “the proliferation of meetings at dates close to the Council’s sessions is one of the main reasons why rule 14 (4) of the Council’s rules of procedure has become almost a dead letter”, the Council recognized that the essential remedy for this could not be sought through changes in the wording or the interpretation of the Council’s rules of procedure but through measures to spread out United Nations meetings over a biennial instead of an annual cycle. However, the Council also recognized that so long as existing conditions prevailed, exceptions might have to be made, in suitable cases, to rule 14, para. 4, as is provided therein, so that the Council might consider reports from its subsidiary bodies which could not, because of the schedule of meetings, be circulated six weeks in advance of the Council’s session. At the same time, the Council requested the Secretariat to make greater efforts to issue the reports of subsidiary bodies as early as possible in advance of the Council’s session, and in no case later than six weeks after the conclusion of the meeting of the subsidiary body.

The Council further noted that the dates of the meetings of subsidiary bodies ought, as far as possible, to be fixed in such a way as to enable rule 14, para. 4, to be observed. In the case of reports not depending on the meetings of subsidiary bodies, the Council noted that there was less reason why rule 14, para. 4, should not generally be respected. Finally, the Council took the position that the Secretary-General should be requested to plan the preparation of his reports to the Council in such a way as to observe the six-week rule.

72. Subsequently, by its resolution 1623 (LI), the Council decided to arrange its programme of work to provide for: (a) a short session in January to deal with organizational questions; (b) a session in the second quarter of the calendar year to be devoted mainly to social questions, the reports of subsidiary bodies and elections; (c) a session in the third quarter of the calendar year to be devoted to major questions arising from the world economic situation and, in alternate years, to a debate on the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade; and (d) a brief resumed session during the session of the General Assembly to deal with items that could not normally be considered at the regular sessions of the Council.155 In addition, by the same resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the members of the Council, to develop a more rational agenda designed to avoid duplica-
tion of discussion and to enable the Council to concentrate on policy issues, grouping items on related issues and providing for the consideration of important substantive issues on a longer-term planning cycle, where that was appropriate. The Council further invited the Secretary-General, in consultation with delegations, to circulate a more detailed schedule of work for each session and to ensure that the annotated provisional agenda for each session was more informative. Moreover, the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare for each substantive agenda item a short document summarizing the previous consideration of the question and the various options for decision by the Council, as well as the consequences likely to arise from such decisions. By the same resolution, the Council decided that, as a general rule and in order to avoid repetitious debates, consideration of the reports of all its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies should be confined, as far as possible, to matters requiring decisions or guidance from the Council. Finally, the Council reaffirmed the importance of the strict observance of rule 14, para. 4, of its rules of procedure and decided that the calendar of conferences should be drawn up in such a way as to permit the observance of the rule.

73. At its 1837th meeting, on 28 July 1972, the Economic and Social Council called for a strict enforcement of the six-weeks rule for the circulation of documents before meetings, in all working languages, without prejudice to the other languages, by the dropping of items from the agenda automatically when the rule was violated, unless the Council, with the concurrence of the additional members of the sessional committees, decided otherwise at its organizational meetings or its first regular session. At the same meeting, the Council decided that it should determine, when requesting a specific report, whether that report must be considered by the Council and thus become the subject of an agenda item or whether it could be circulated for information. The Council further decided that the Secretary-General should communicate to members of the Council and its sessional committees, as soon as possible after the Council had considered the provisional agenda for the following session, an annotated provisional agenda for the next session which would indicate briefly the history of each item, the available documentation, the substance of the matter to be discussed and relevant earlier decisions by United Nations organs.

74. By its resolution 1768 (LIV) of 18 May 1973, the Economic and Social Council decided that henceforth it would so orient its deliberations as to focus attention on major issues and emerging developments on which action was necessary to bring about more equitable and harmonious economic and social relationships, in particular through the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade in a dynamic way. To that end, the Council decided that it would in alternate years concentrate its attention on the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy, in particular during the summer session, and other areas requiring policy guidance and action.

The Council further decided that in the alternate year to that of the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy, it would concentrate on the examination of problems and areas of current or potential significance for development and international cooperation, including, in particular, new problems or concepts of a global or interdisciplinary nature which required adequate conceptualization, political action or proper coordination of operational implementation. Such problems and areas would include those identified during the course of the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy or suggested by Member States, the General Assembly, other United Nations organs and sectoral or regional bodies, or the Secretary-General.

75. And by its resolution 1770 (LIV) of the same date, the Economic and Social Council decided, without prejudice to rule 17 of its rules of procedure concerning revision of the agenda, that, except in the case of reports of subsidiary and other bodies on meetings which had concluded 12 weeks or less before the opening of the session of the Council, items on the Council’s agenda would be automatically postponed to the following session in cases where the documentation called for had not been made available to members of the Council six weeks before the opening of the session.

76. By its resolution 1807 (LV) of 8 August 1973, the Economic and Social Council noted with concern the rapidly growing number of items on the agendas of its recent sessions and the incomplete or postponed consideration of some items that that has brought about. In that respect, the Council expressed its conviction that “the streamlining of the Council’s programme of work and agenda is essential, in order to achieve a more rational consideration of substantive issues, to improve the quality and reduce the volume of documentation and to enhance the Council’s constitutional role and functions”. Recalling its resolutions 1623 (L) and 1768 (LIV), the Council accordingly decided to concentrate its attention at future sessions on a limited number of carefully selected major policy issues, to be studied in depth with a view to elaborating concrete, action-oriented recommendations. The Council therefore requested the Secretary-General, when preparing the programme of work for the year, to “arrange the agenda items in an integrated manner, so that similar and connected issues can be discussed in one debate and under a single heading”. To that end, the Council authorized its officers to prepare on an experimental basis, in consultations with members of the Council and its sessional committees and with the assistance of the Secretariat, a list of a limited number of major policy issues and other major items, aiming at no more than 15 per session, for the Council’s programme of work for 1974, for consideration and approval by the Council at its organizational meetings in January 1974.

77. Subsequently, by its resolution 3341 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, the General Assembly, taking due account of Economic and Social Council resolutions 1623

---

156 Ibid., para. 3. See also ESC resolution 1624 (L1).
157 ESC resolution 1623 (L1), para. 6.
158 Ibid., para. 7.
159 Ibid., para. 5.
160 Ibid., para. 12.
161 ESC (LIII), Suppl. No. 1, p. 24 (agenda item 16), para. 3.
162 Ibid., para. 10.
163 Ibid., para. 11.
164 ESC resolution 1768 (LIV), para. 1.
The Secretariat noted that while work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, as called for in resolution 1807 (LV), tended to have the opposite effect on the Council’s consideration of the questions before it. Moreover, the existing method of formulating agendas did not lend itself to establishing the proper interrelationships among the various decisions adopted by the Council.

By its resolution 1894 (LVII) of 1 August 1974, the Economic and Social Council, noting with concern the large volume of documentation submitted for its recent sessions, requested the Secretariat, when preparing the basic programme of work of the Council for the year in pursuance of Council resolution 1807 (LV), to indicate in respect of each agenda item the documents to be submitted under that item and the legislative authority for their preparation, in order to enable the Council to consider the documents from the point of view of their contribution to the work of the Council, and of their urgency and relevance in the light of the current situation.

In submitting the draft programme of work for 1974, the Secretariat brought to the attention of the Council the fact that in that year it would be required to consider 64 substantive questions. (In the event, 19 substantive questions were added during the year.) The Secretariat, in conformity with Council resolution 1807 (LV), suggested an “integration” of items intended to reduce the number of debates, according to which the agenda of the fifty-sixth session would comprise 13 items and that of the fifty-seventh, 14 items. (The agenda of the resumed fifty-seventh session contained 13 items.) At its organizational session for 1974, the Council adopted, on an experimental basis, the “integrated agenda” proposed by the Secretariat which consisted of a technical grouping of related items under main headings and several “subitems”.

Subsequently, however, the Secretariat noted that “while such integration would create the illusion that the Council’s agenda consisted of fewer items, the actual workload of the Council would not be substantially reduced, at least not in the sense of enabling it to “concentrate its attention on a limited number of carefully selected major policy issues”, as called for in resolution 1807 (LV). Consequently, in its report on the rationalization of the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, pursuant to Council resolution 1907 (LVII) and General Assembly resolution 3341 (XXIX), the Secretariat noted that while constitutional and other statutory provisions prevented a large number of questions from being eliminated from the basic programme of work, the experience of 1974 suggested that more drastic changes had to be made in the method by which agendas were formulated. “A method, which, in all basic respects, has remained unchanged for the last 25 years”, the Secretariat therefore suggested the gradual introduction of a substantive, rather than merely a mechanical, “integration” of items. Specifically, the practice whereby every report of a subsidiary or a related organ, and every report requested form the Secretariat or from an agency, automatically became an item or sub-item on the Council’s agenda should be abandoned. The Secretariat’s suggestion was based on the opinion that such procedure was incompatible with the objectives that the Council had set itself and, more often than not, had the effect of frustrating the purposes of such reports, if only because it prevented each report from being considered within its proper context. Noting that most issues of contemporary international concern were interdisciplinary in nature and therefore called for an interdisciplinary approach, the Secretariat concluded that the existing procedure tended to have the opposite effect on the Council’s consideration of the questions before it. Moreover, the existing method of formulating agendas did not lend itself to establishing the proper interrelationships among the various decisions adopted by the Council.

Accordingly, in formulating the draft agenda for 1975, the Secretariat attempted to bring about a “substantive” integration of items. “To the extent that this involves political and policy judgements”, however, the Secretariat recognized that it was essentially for the members of the Council themselves to consider ways and means of drawing up agendas which more fully conformed to the current role and requirements of the Council. The Secretariat understood that that was the fundamental purpose of the organizational sessions of the Council and suggested that agendas should therefore be considered essentially as bases for discussion. In that regard, the Secretariat further suggested that the Council should use the formulation of its agenda as a means of defining in practical terms the manner in which it intended to operate. Accordingly, each agenda item should be such as to enable the Council to select the major issues on which to focus its attention, so as to work out policy recommendations and guidelines as called for in Council resolution 1768 (LIV).

According to the Secretariat, such a new approach to the formulation of agendas would also enable the Council to agree on the manner in which it intended to review the reports of its subsidiary and related organs, as called for by the General Assembly resolution 3341 (XXIX). In that respect, the Secretariat noted that such reviews had generally involved a debate on all or most of the substantive issues examined in reports, notwithstanding repeated expressions of intention to delegate to subsidiary bodies wider authority to deal with all substantive questions within their competence in the light of the fact that their membership was similar to that of the Council. The Council, being “the central organ for comprehensive policy formulation”, should concentrate its attention on the consideration of how to fit the conclusions of such bodies into overall strategies for development and economic cooperation and its agenda ought to reflect that approach. Another innovation suggested by the Secretariat was that the Council, when it formulated its agenda at its organizational sessions, should simultaneously allocate the various items to its sessional bodies. That approach was deemed to constitute a logical corollary to a “substantive integration” of agenda items, in which the system of sub-items would be dispensed with, giving each sessional body the flexibility required to consider from the beginning of the year, through formal and informal consultations, its approach to each subject and the possible organization of its work on each item.
83. Subsequently, by its resolution 1949 (LVIII) of 8 May 1975, the Economic and Social Council adopted several amendments to its rules of procedure concerning the agenda. Rule 11 of the existing rules of procedure concerning the consideration of the provisional agenda was integrated under rule 9, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the revised rules of procedure concerning the drawing up of the provisional agenda, to read as follows:

"4. The agenda for the organizational session shall include the consideration of the provisional agenda for the first regular session of the Council. The agenda of the first regular session shall include the consideration of the provisional agenda for the second regular session."

"5. Agenda items shall be arranged in an integrated manner, so that similar or connected issues can be discussed in one debate and under a single heading." 185

Under the same rule, paragraph 1, with a view to allowing the provisional agenda for the Council’s organizational session to be put into its final form after the closing of the regular session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General was required to submit to the Council “the provisional agenda for the organizational session at least three weeks in advance of the opening of that session”. 186

84. Rule 14, paragraph 4, of the existing rules of procedure concerning the adoption of the agenda was also amended and renumbered under rule 13 of the revised rules of procedure to reflect the provisions of Council resolution 1770 (LV) of 18 May 1973, taking into account the Council’s decision taken at its 1837th meeting concerning the six-week rule for the circulation of documents prior to the opening of sessions, to read as follows:

"Unless the Council decides otherwise, if the documentation relating to an item of the agenda has not been circulated, in all working languages, six weeks before the opening of a regular session, the item shall be postponed to the following session, except in the case of reports of subsidiary and other bodies on meetings that have been concluded twelve weeks or less before the opening of the session of the Council." 187

85. Rule 15 of the existing rules of procedure concerning the allocation of items was also revised and renumbered under rule 14 of the revised rules of procedure to include the possibility for the Council to refer items without preliminary debate not only to specialized agencies, commissions or standing committees, the Secretary-General or the proposer of the item, but also to “another organization or programme of the United Nations system” in order to enable the Council to make use of the services of other components of the United Nations system, as the need might arise. 188

86. During its organizational session for 1976, at its 1984th meeting, on 15 January, the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed the provisions of its resolutions 1768 (LIV) and 1807 (LV) whereby “it shall concentrate its attention on a limited number of major policy issues, to be studied in depth with a view to elaborating concrete action-oriented recommendations, which issues shall be selected at the outset of each session in the light of relevant developments and of informal consultations among delegations”. 189

87. Subsequently, by resolution 32/197, the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System, including the recommendation that the Economic and Social Council should organize its work on a biennial basis and provide for shorter but more frequent subject-oriented sessions spread throughout the year. In that regard, it was further recommended that, in formulating its biennial programme of work, the Council should identify the issues which would require priority consideration, decide on the schedule and agenda for its subject-oriented sessions, and determine the manner in which substantively related items on its agenda should be grouped under one heading for purposes of consideration.

88. At its 45th plenary meeting, on 19 December 1978, the Economic and Social Council decided to adopt a biennial programme of work as at 1 January 1979 and to request the Secretary-General, accordingly, to submit the draft programme programme of work for the Council on a biennial basis. 190

**c. Organization of regular sessions**

3. METHODS OF SELECTING THE PRESIDENT

89. By its resolution 1807 (LV), following the entry into force of the amendment to Article 61 of the Charter enlarging its membership from 27 to 54 in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 1621 (LI) and General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI), the Council decided to consider amending, as soon as possible, its rules of procedure in order to provide for the representation of all regional groups of countries among its officers. 191

90. During its organizational session for 1974, at its 1887th meeting, on 7 January, the President of the Economic and Social Council noted that a common feature of both Council resolutions 1768 (LIV) and 1807 (LV) concerning the rationalization of the work of the Council was the clearly expressed desire to make greater use of the Council’s elected officers. 192

The President explained that the intention was not to create a closed steering committee which would impose its wishes on the Council, but rather that those resolutions referred explicitly to the necessity for continuous consultations among all members of the Council and with the Secretariat, consultations which, in his opinion, were made difficult under the existing rules of procedure. In that regard, the additional tasks of the President and officers should be seen as a means of facilitating the work of the entire Council. 193

91. At the same meeting, on the proposal of the representative of the Netherlands, the Council decided to suspend
rule 20 of its rules of procedure in order to proceed with the election of four vice-presidents instead of three. To do so would enable all the regional groups to be represented among the officers of the Council in coping with its heavier workload, as provided for in Council resolutions 1768 (LIV) and 1807 (LV) on the rationalization of the work of the Council.

92. Subsequently, by its resolution 1949 (LVII), on the basis of the recommendations of the Secretariat and taking into account Council resolution 1807 (LV) and the Council’s decision taken at its 1887th meeting, the Council amended rule 20 of the existing rules of procedure and renumbered it under rule 18 of the revised rules of procedure concerning the election and special responsibilities of the President and the Vice-Presidents. The revised rule also took into account the practice of the Council by formalizing the existence of the Bureau, composed of the President and the Vice-Presidents, to read as follows: “Each year, at the commencement of its first meeting, the Council shall elect a President and four Vice-Presidents from among the representatives of its members. The President and the Vice-Presidents shall constitute the Bureau.”

4. POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

93. By its resolution 1724 (LIII) of 28 July 1972, the Economic and Social Council recommended to its President to hold, at the beginning of the summer sessions of the Council, periodic meetings of the Bureau with the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs, the Secretary of the Council, the Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions, the Director of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut and, whenever possible, the Chairmen of the regional economic commissions or their representatives, so that the Council might be in a better position to assist the regional economic commissions and the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut to discharge their functions in accordance with their terms of reference and within the framework of the Second United Nations Development Decade.

94. By its resolution 1768 (LIV), the Council requested its President, in consultation with the other officers and the Secretary-General, to initiate, as and when required, consultations with Member States and the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system, both during and before its regular and special sessions, for the purpose of preparing those sessions and their agendas and, in general, of facilitating the task of the Council in the light of such consultations.

**5. LIMITATION OF DEBATE**

**6. OFFICIAL AND WORKING LANGUAGES**

95. At its 1810th meeting, on 6 January 1972, the Economic and Social Council decided, on the recommendation of the Secretariat, that the obtaining summar or summary records shall not be provided for a newly established subsidiary body of the Council—rule 43 of the rules of procedure notwithstanding—or for a special meeting or conference, unless they are specifically authorized in the enabling resolution. The Council specified, however, that that decision did not apply to the Committee on Review and Appraisal or the Committee on Science and Technology, for which the provision of summary records was authorized in accordance with the decision adopted by the Council at its 1808th meeting, on 20 December 1971.

96. By its resolution 1949 (LVIII), based on the recommendations of the Secretariat, the Council amended rule 43 of the existing rules of procedure and renumbered it under rule 38 of the revised rules of procedure concerning summary records of public meetings. Under the new rule, summary records of public meetings of the Council’s subsidiary organs were to be prepared by the Secretariat only where authorized by the Council and neither verbatim nor summary records were to be provided for newly established subsidiary organs of the Council unless they had been specifically authorized by the Council. Rule 46 of the existing rules of procedure was also amended and renumbered under rule 40 of the revised rules of procedure concerning sound recordings of meetings, extending the possibility of sound recordings to all subsidiary organs of the Council, where so authorized by the Council.

97. By its resolution 3415 (XXX) of 8 December 1975, the General Assembly endorsed the criteria contained in the report of the Secretary-General on publications and documentation and invited, inter alia, the Economic and Social Council to consider the application of the proposed criteria to its meeting records and to ensure that the meeting records of its subsidiary bodies conformed to these criteria, taking into consideration the merits of each particular case.

98. During its organizational session for 1976, at its 1984th meeting, the Council decided, with regard to General Assembly resolution 3415 (XXX), to endorse some of the criteria contained in the report of the Secretary-General on publications and documentation and to request the
Secretariat to apply them to the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Council. The Council further decided to authorize the Secretariat to apply the procedure envisaged in the report of the Secretary-General whereby the Secretariat should, as an experiment in 1976, issue the summary records of the Council’s sessional committees and of its subsidiary bodies which received summary records, in general distribution, subject to the issuance of corrigenda to remove serious errors only. The Council also authorized the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to continue to receive meeting records. Moreover, the Council decided to apply with effect from 1 January 1977 criterion 9 of the Secretary-General’s report, whereby subsidiary bodies otherwise entitled to receive meeting records for all or some of their meetings should be required to dispense with them when meeting away from recognized United Nations conference centres. Finally, the Council reaffirmed the principle contained in criterion 10 of the Secretary-General’s report that the summary records should be limited to 15 pages per meeting of 2 1/2 to 3 hours and that efforts should be made to reduce the summary records of subsidiary bodies to 10 pages per meeting of the same length.

99. At its 2005th meeting, on 14 May 1976, the Economic and Social Council decided that, in accordance with its decision 137 (ORG-76) of 15 January 1976, at the first meeting of each session of a subsidiary body of the Council, the chairman should propose, and the subsidiary body should decide, on a limited number of substantive items for which summary records would be required.

8. PARTICIPATION IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE COUNCIL

a. Members and non-members of the United Nations

100. By its resolution 1561 (XLIX) of 12 November 1970, the Economic and Social Council recalled that the participation of States Members of the United Nations which were not members of the regional organs was governed by the terms of reference and rules of procedure of those regional organs, in accordance with Article 69 of the Charter of the United Nations and the interpretation thereof in rule 75 of the rules of procedure of the Council, and that that question was accordingly subject to the decisions of such organs.

101. By its resolution 1949 (LVIII), the Council amended rules 75 and 76 of the existing rules of procedure and renumbered them under rule 72 of the revised rules of procedure concerning the participation of non-member States in the deliberations of the Council. The new rule provided that the Council shall, and a committee or sessional body may, invite not only any Member of the United Nations that is not a member of that body, but also “any other State”, if being understood that in discharging its functions under this rule, the Council would follow the practice of the General Assembly in implementing an “all States” clause, and that in all cases where it was advisable it would request the opinion of the Assembly before taking appropriate decisions.

102. At its 2078th meeting, on 22 July 1977, the Economic and Social Council decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Latin America, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic Commission for Western Asia to invite the Holy See to attend sessions of those commissions on a basis similar to that provided for in the relevant terms of reference applicable to States Members of the United Nations not members of the commissions.

103. By its resolution 32/197, the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System concerning the exercise of the Council’s functions and powers under the Charter and the fulfillment of its role as set out in the relevant General Assembly and Council resolutions, including the recommendation that the Council should continue to invite non-member States to participate in its deliberations on any matter of particular concern to them.

b. Specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations

104. At its 1769th meeting, on 20 May 1971, the Economic and Social Council approved a series of recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on relations with non-United Nations intergovernmental organizations in the economic and social fields, including the recommendation that the Council should extend a standing invitation to three intergovernmental organizations to be represented by observers at future sessions of the Council. Those intergovernmental organizations would be entitled to participate, with the approval of the Council and without the right to vote, in the Council’s debates on questions of concern to them. The Council further approved the recommendation that it should authorize the Secretary-General to propose from time to time, as appropriate, that certain other intergovernmental organizations might be invited to be represented by observers in individual sessions when the Council discussed questions of direct concern to them. Those organizations would participate, with the Council’s approval and without the right to vote, in connection with particular agenda items. Furthermore, the Council also decided that, in the future, the Secretary-General should arrange for invitations to all sessions of the Council to be extended to several intergovernmental organizations, without informing the Council thereof. Finally, the Council approved the recommendation that its functional commissions and standing committees should continue to invite to their meetings intergovernmental organizations in fields of direct concern.

---

216 E S C decision 137 (ORG-76), para. 5(a).
217 ibid., para. 5(b).
218 ibid., para. 5(c).
219 ibid., para. 5(d).
220 ibid. para. (e).
221 E S C decision 153 (LIX), para. (e).
222 E/3063/Rev.1, rule 75. See also this Supplement, under Article 69.
223 E S C resolution 1561 (XLIX), para. 2.
224 E/5715, rule 72.
225 E/4961.
226 See this Supplement, under Article 70.
227 E S C (L), Suppl. No. 1, p. 25 (agenda item 12(a)).
to them, and keep the Council informed thereof. Those or-
ganizations would be entitled to participate, without the
right to vote, in debates on questions of concern to them.

105. By its resolution 1724 (LIII) of 28 July 1972, with a
view to increasing coordination as a means of placing itself
in a better position to discharge its responsibilities as reg-
ard the application of the International Development
Strategy for the Second United Nations Development De-
cade, the Council requested the Secretary-General to ar-
range for, inter alia, the executive heads of the specialized
agencies, including the International Bank for Reconstruc-
tion and Development and the International Monetary
Fund, as appropriate, and heads of other relevant organiza-
tions in the United Nations system, to participate at the be-

106. Subsequently, at its 1858th meeting, on 18 May
1973, the Council decided to invite the Director-General of
the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to participate
in the general debate of the fifty-fifth session of the Coun-
cil, in conformity with Council resolution 1724 (LIII).

107. By Council resolution 1949 (LVIII), a new rule was
introduced into the revised rules of procedure of the Coun-
cil concerning the participation of intergovernmental or-
ganizations other than specialized agencies. The new rule 79
provided that:

"representatives of intergovernmental organizations
accorded permanent observer status by the General As-
sembly and of other intergovernmental organizations
designated on an ad hoc or a continuing basis by the
Council on the recommendation of the Bureau, may par-
ticipate, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of
the Council on questions within the scope of the activi-
ties of the organizations."\textsuperscript{235}

The new rule in effect regularized the status of certain in-
tergovernmental organizations recognized in the past by
the General Assembly\textsuperscript{236} and formalized the established
practice of the Council with regard to the participation of
intergovernmental organizations,\textsuperscript{237} as envisaged in the
Council’s decision taken at its 1769th meeting.\textsuperscript{218}

108. At its 1973rd meeting, on 23 July 1975, the Eco-
nomic and Social Council decided to designate a number
of intergovernmental organizations previously invited to
take part in its work pursuant to various decisions and reso-

dutions, to participate on a continuing basis in the work of
the Council, in accordance with rule 79 of its revised rules
of procedure.\textsuperscript{238} The Council also designated two other in-
tergovernmental organizations to participate, on an ad hoc
basis, in its deliberations relating to specific agenda items
of concern to them, in accordance with rule 79 of the re-
vised rules of procedure.\textsuperscript{239}

109. At its 2032nd meeting, on 5 August 1976, on the
recommendation of the Bureau of the Council after an ex-
amination of an application received from an intergov-
ernmental organization for designation by the Council in ac-
cordance with rule 79 of the revised rules of procedure, the

Council decided to designate the intergovernmental or-
ganization concerned to participate on an ad hoc basis in the
deliberations of the Council on questions within the scope of
the activities of the organization.\textsuperscript{241} In another instance,
at its 2060th meeting, on 13 May 1977, the Council, having
received an application from an intergovernmental organi-
fication for designation in accordance with rule 79 of the re-
vised rules of procedure, decided, on the recommendation
of the Bureau of the Council, that that intergovernmental
organization might participate, without the right to vote,
on an ad hoc basis in the deliberations of the Council
within the scope of the activities of that organization.\textsuperscript{242}

c. Non-governmental organizations

110. By its resolution 1949 (LVIII), the Economic and
Social Council introduced a new rule into its revised rules
of procedure concerning the participation of national liber-
ation movements in the deliberations of the Council. The
new rule 73 provided that "the Council may invite any na-
tional liberation movement recognized by or in accordance
with resolutions of the General Assembly to participate,
without the right to vote, in its deliberations on any matter
of particular concern to that movement."\textsuperscript{243} The new rule in
effect regularized the status of certain national liberation
movements recognized in the past by the General As-

ey

111. By its resolution 1949 (LVIII), the Economic and
Social Council decided to participate, on an ad hoc basis in
the deliberations of the Council on questions within the scope
of the activities of the organization.\textsuperscript{241} In another instance,
at its 2060th meeting, on 13 May 1977, the Council, having
received an application from an intergovernmental organi-
fication for designation in accordance with rule 79 of the re-
vised rules of procedure, decided, on the recommendation
of the Bureau of the Council, that that intergovernmental
organization might participate, without the right to vote,
on an ad hoc basis in the deliberations of the Council
within the scope of the activities of that organization.\textsuperscript{242}

c. Non-governmental organizations

110. By its resolution 1949 (LVIII), the Economic and
Social Council introduced a new rule into its revised rules
of procedure concerning the participation of national liber-
ation movements in the deliberations of the Council. The
new rule 73 provided that "the Council may invite any na-
tional liberation movement recognized by or in accordance
with resolutions of the General Assembly to participate,
without the right to vote, in its deliberations on any matter
of particular concern to that movement."\textsuperscript{243} The new rule in
effect regularized the status of certain national liberation
movements recognized in the past by the General As-

ey

111. By its resolution 1949 (LVIII), the Economic and
Social Council decided to participate, on an ad hoc basis in
the deliberations of the Council on questions within the scope
of the activities of the organization.\textsuperscript{241} In another instance,
at its 2060th meeting, on 13 May 1977, the Council, having
received an application from an intergovernmental organi-
fication for designation in accordance with rule 79 of the re-
vised rules of procedure, decided, on the recommendation
of the Bureau of the Council, that that intergovernmental
organization might participate, without the right to vote,
on an ad hoc basis in the deliberations of the Council
within the scope of the activities of that organization.\textsuperscript{242}

c. Non-governmental organizations

110. By its resolution 1949 (LVIII), the Economic and
Social Council introduced a new rule into its revised rules
of procedure concerning the participation of national liber-
ation movements in the deliberations of the Council. The
new rule 73 provided that "the Council may invite any na-
tional liberation movement recognized by or in accordance
with resolutions of the General Assembly to participate,
without the right to vote, in its deliberations on any matter
of particular concern to that movement."\textsuperscript{243} The new rule in
effect regularized the status of certain national liberation
movements recognized in the past by the General As-

ey

111. By its resolution 1949 (LVIII), the Economic and
Social Council decided to participate, on an ad hoc basis in
the deliberations of the Council on questions within the scope
of the activities of the organization.\textsuperscript{241} In another instance,
at its 2060th meeting, on 13 May 1977, the Council, having
received an application from an intergovernmental organi-
fication for designation in accordance with rule 79 of the re-
vised rules of procedure, decided, on the recommendation
of the Bureau of the Council, that that intergovernmental
organization might participate, without the right to vote,
on an ad hoc basis in the deliberations of the Council
within the scope of the activities of that organization.\textsuperscript{242}

9. RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMISSIONS

OF THE COUNCIL

113. By its resolution 1768 (LIV), the Economic and So-
cial Council decided that a review of the terms of reference
of its subsidiary bodies should be undertaken and that the
review should be made on the basis of an assessment and
reorientation of their role, particularly in the implementa-
tion of the International Development Strategy, as adopted
by the General Assembly in its resolution 2626 (XXV).\textsuperscript{245}
In that regard, the regional economic commissions were
requested, where necessary, to undertake a similar review of
their subsidiary bodies.\textsuperscript{246}

\textsuperscript{233} E S C resolution 1724 (LIII), para. 1.

\textsuperscript{234} E S C decision 190 (LXI); see also this Supplement, under Article

71.

\textsuperscript{235} E S C decision 239 (LXII); see also this Supplement, under Article

70.

\textsuperscript{236} E S C (LIV), Suppl. No. 1, p. 40, Item 30.

\textsuperscript{237} E 5715, rule 79.

\textsuperscript{238} See G A resolutions 253 (III), 477 (V) and 2011 (XX).

\textsuperscript{239} See para. 104 above.

\textsuperscript{240} E 5715, rule 79.

\textsuperscript{241} E S C (LIV), Suppl. No. 1, p. 40, Item 30.

\textsuperscript{242} See para. 104 above.

\textsuperscript{243} See footnote 4 above.

\textsuperscript{244} See para. 104 above.

\textsuperscript{245} E S C (LIV), Suppl. No. 1, p. 40, Item 30.
114. Subsequently, at its 1858th meeting, on 18 May 1973, the Council decided that its subsidiary bodies, with the exception of the regional economic commissions, might not create either standing or ad hoc inter-sessional subsidiary bodies without prior approval by the Council.\footnote{E S C (LIV), Suppl. No. 1, p. 34 (agenda item 19, para. (a)).}

115. At its organizational session for 1974, the Economic and Social Council decided to review, at its fifty-sixth session, within the context of the agenda item entitled “Rationalization of the work of the Council”, the rules of procedure of the Council and those of its subsidiary bodies, including its functional commissions.\footnote{E S C decision 1 (LVI).} In pursuance of that decision, the Secretariat, in its note on the review of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, suggested that, “inasmuch as the rules of procedure of the Council’s functional commissions are based upon those of the Council, the review of the former should be deferred until a revised text of the rules of procedure of the Council is approved”.\footnote{E/5450, para. 7.}

116. At its 1919th meeting, on 1 August 1974, the Council decided to authorize the Secretary-General, in consultation with the President of the Economic and Social Council, to change the place and/or dates of meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Council, including functional and regional commissions, if exceptional circumstances so warranted, provided that the change could be absorbed within existing budgetary appropriations.\footnote{E/5450, annex, pp. 13-15.}

117. During its organizational session for 1975, at its 1937th meeting, on 15 January 1975, the Economic and Social Council decided to commend to all its subsidiary bodies the practice of holding informal discussions on items of their agenda as frequently as possible during their sessions. The Council also authorized its functional and regional economic commissions to provide summary records for particular discussions when needed, and to request them, when adopting their agendas, to limit the provision of such records to those items in relation to which summary records were deemed essential.\footnote{E/5450, paras. (i).}

118. At the same meeting, the Council requested the Secretary-General to explore the possibility of scheduling more meetings of the functional commissions of the Council during the second half of 1975 at Geneva and, “in due course, when facilities are available, at Vienna”,\footnote{E/5450, para. 4.} in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3350 (XXIX) of 18 December 1974.\footnote{E S C decision 52 (LVII), para. (d).}

119. By its resolution 1949 (LVIII) of 8 May 1975, on the basis of the recommendations of the Secretariat,\footnote{E/5450, para. 7.} the Economic and Social Council merged chapters V and XII of the existing rules of procedure concerning committees and commissions of the Council respectively and renumbered them under chapter V of the revised rules of procedure concerning sessional bodies and subsidiary organs. Taking into account the decision taken at its 1858th meeting,\footnote{E S C decision 65 (ORG-75), paras. (e)-(f).} the Council introduced a new provision under rule 24, paragraph 2, of the revised rules of procedure concerning the establishment of subsidiary organs, providing that “except for the regional commissions, the commissions and committees of the Council shall not create either standing or ad hoc inter-sessional subsidiary bodies without prior approval by the Council”.\footnote{Ibid., para. (i).}

120. By the same resolution, on the basis of the recommendation of the Secretariat,\footnote{E S C resolution 1894 (LVII), paras. 2-3.} the Council decided to consider at its sixtieth session the question of the review of the rules of procedure of its functional commissions.\footnote{E S C decision 209 (ORG-77).} The Council also drew the attention of its regional commissions to the revised rules of procedure of the Council, “which they may wish to take into account in connection with their own rules of procedure”.\footnote{E S C decision 210 (ORG-77).}

a. Functional commissions

121. By its resolution 1894 (LVII) of 1 August 1974, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit at each session of a functional commission a draft provisional agenda for its following session, indicating in respect of each agenda item the documents to be submitted under that item and the legislative authority for their preparation, with a view to enabling the functional commission to consider the documents from the point of view of their contribution to the work of the commission, and of their urgency and relevance in the light of the current situation.\footnote{E/5899, para. 2.}

122. At its 2005th meeting, on 14 May 1976, pursuant to its resolution 1949 (LVIII), the Council decided to review at its organizational session for 1977 the rules of procedure of its functional commissions so that they might conform to its own revised rules of procedure and, to that end, to request the Secretariat to prepare a draft revised text of the rules of procedure of the commissions.\footnote{E S C decision 153 (LX).}

123. At its 2041st meeting, on 13 January 1977, the Economic and Social Council decided to review the rules of procedure of its functional commissions at the sixty-second session in the context of the agenda item entitled “Restructuring the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system”.\footnote{E S C decision 209 (ORG-77).} The Council also requested the Secretariat to undertake a review of the methods in use for the confirmation of representatives on functional commission of the Council and to report it to it at its sixty-second session under the same agenda item.\footnote{E S C resolution 1894 (LVII), paras. 3.}

124. In its note on the review of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat explained that its draft revised text of such rules was based on the revised rules of procedure of the Council adopted in its resolution 1949 (LVIII), as well as on subsequent decisions of the Council regarding its own rules and those of its subsidiary organs.\footnote{E S C decision 210 (ORG-77).} The draft also took into account the practice of the functional commissions.

125. At its 2053rd meeting, on 26 April 1977, having reviewed the draft revised text submitted by the
Secretariat in pursuance of the Council's decision taken at its 2005th meeting, the Council decided to adopt the draft, without a vote and as orally revised at the meeting. By resolution 32/197, the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System, including the recommendation that measures should be adopted by the Economic and Social Council not later than the end of 1978 for the purpose of redefining and regrouping, on the basis of their substantive and methodological interrelationships, the terms of reference of the Council's functional commissions, or the assumption by the Council in appropriate instances of direct responsibility for their work.

b. Regional economic commissions

127. By resolution 1561 (XLIX) of 12 November 1970, the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed that the question of the appropriateness of the choice of venue for the regular session of the regional economic commissions was primarily within the competence of the commissions meetings as intergovernmental bodies, as provided for in their rules of procedure. The Council also recalled that the participation of States Members of the United Nations which were not members of the regional organs was governed by the terms of reference and rules of procedure of those regional organs, in accordance with Article 69 of the Charter of the United Nations and the interpretation thereof in rule 75 of the rules of procedure of the Council, and that the question was accordingly subject to the decisions of such organs.

128. By its resolution 1950 (LIX) of 22 July 1975, on the basis of the report of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Council recommended that the General Assembly should approve the adoption of Arabic as an official and working language of the Commission, in addition to English and French. During its thirtieth session, at its 2441st plenary meeting, on 15 December 1975, the General Assembly endorsed the Council's recommendation.

129. At its 2078th meeting, on 22 July 1977, the Economic and Social Council decided to recommend to its regional economic commissions to invite the Holy See to attend their sessions on a basis similar to that provided for in the relevant terms of reference applicable to States Members of the United Nations not members of the commissions.

10. SUSPENSION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COUNCIL

130. At its 1848th meeting, on 8 January 1973, the Economic and Social Council decided to suspend that part of rule 82 of its rules of procedure according to which the members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations shall be members of the Council, in order to permit the additional members of the sessional committees also to serve on the Committee, pursuant to Council resolution 1621 A (LI) of 30 July 1971 and General Assembly resolution 2847(XXVI) of 20 December 1971 on the enlargement of the membership of the Council.

131. At the opening meeting of the organizational session for 1974, on 7 January 1974, the Economic and Social Council decided to suspend rule 20 of its rules of procedure in order to enable the Council to elect four Vice-Presidents instead of three.

132. At its 1939th meeting, on 28 January 1975, the Economic and Social Council decided to suspend that part of rule 82 of its rules of procedure according to which the members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations shall serve for one year, in order to permit members of the Committee to serve for four years.

133. At its 1984th meeting, on 15 January 1976, for the purpose of holding its sixty-first session over two different periods, from 1 to 9 July and from 12 July to 6 August 1976, the Council decided to suspend rule 2 of its revised rules of procedure regarding dates of convening and adjournment.
HOW TO OBTAIN UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS

United Nations publications may be obtained from bookstores and distributors throughout the world. Consult your bookstore or write to: United Nations, Sales Section, New York or Geneva.

COMMENT SE PROCURER LES PUBLICATIONS DES NATIONS UNIES


COMO CONSEGUIR PUBLICACIONES DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

Las publicaciones de las Naciones Unidas están en venta en librerías y casas distribuidoras en todas partes del mundo. Consulte a su librero o diríjase a: Naciones Unidas, Sección de Ventas, Nueva York o Ginebra.