ARTICLE 72

CONTENTS

Text of Article 72

Introductory note 1-2

I. General survey 3-4

II. Analytical summary of practice 5-26
   A. Adoption and revision of the rules of procedures of the Council 5-7
   B. Some basic features of the rules of procedure of the Council 8-26
      1. Sessions 8-14
         (a) Regular sessions 8-12
         (b) Special sessions 13-14
         ** (c) Date of sessions
         ** (d) Place of sessions
      2. Agenda of the Council 15-16
      **3. Method of selecting the President
      **4. Powers of the President and their limitations
      **5. Limitation of debate
      **6. Official and working languages
      **7. Nature of records
      8. Participation in the deliberations of the Council 17-18
         **(a) Members and non-members of the United Nations
         **(b) Specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations
         (c) Non-governmental organizations 17-18
         **(d) Other cases of participation in the deliberations of the Council
      9. Rules of procedure of the commissions of the Council 19-26
         (a) Functional commission 19-26
         **(b) Regional commissions
      **10. Suspension of the rules of procedures of the Council

Copyright © United Nations
ARTICLE 72

TEXT OF ARTICLE 72

1. The Economic and Social Council shall adopt its own rules of procedures, 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 meeting on the request of a majority of its members.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Council did not adopt any amendments to its own rules of procedure, the rules of procedure of its functional commissions or the rules of procedure of the regional commissions.

2. As stated 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 the present Supplement under the relevant Articles. These are as follows: with regard to the method of voting, under Article 67; on the functional commissions of the Council, under Article 68; regarding participation of States 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 with regard to consultation with non-governmental organizations, under Article 71.
I. GENERAL SURVEY

3. The Economic and Social Council continued to consider questions relating to procedural matters in the context of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, and of the revitalization of the Council.

4. In addition to the above, the Council adopted a number of resolutions and decisions on an ad hoc basis relating to procedural matters. These related, inter alia, to the organizational and substantive sessions of the Council, its functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies, and its programme of work and agenda. In no instance during the period under review did the Council decide to waive rule 2 of its rules of procedure.

II. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

A. Adoption and revision of the rules of procedure of the Council

5. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Council continued to endorse, in accordance with rule 79 of its rules of procedure, the participation of intergovernmental organizations in its work.

6. At its substantive session of 1996, the Council decided,\(^1\) in accordance with rule 79 of its rules of procedure, that the Union of Economic and Social Councils of Africa might participate on a continuing basis, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Council on questions within the scope of its activities.

7. At its substantive session of 1997, the Council decided\(^2\) that the International Centre of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology might participate on a continuing basis, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Council on questions within the scope of its activities.

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

1. SESSIONS

(a) Regular sessions

8. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Council held one organizational session and one substantive session per year in accordance with its rules of procedure. The substantive sessions of 1995, 1996 and 1997 comprised the high-level segment, the operational activities of the United Nations system for international development cooperation segment, the coordination segment and the general segment.

9. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly decided\(^3\) to establish a humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council, with effect from 1998, and requested the Council to consider expeditiously the related practical arrangements, and make an early recommendation to the Assembly, without prejudice to the work of the other segments of the Council. At its organizational session for 1998, the Council decided\(^4\) upon the practical arrangements for the segment.

\(^3\) G A resolution 51/21B of 19 December 1997.
10. At its substantive session of 1997, the Council decided\(^5\) to convene a session of the Council immediately following its organizational session for 1998, of two to three days’ duration, to consider further the theme of integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits, with a view to assisting in the consideration of the item at its substantive session of 1998.

11. During the period under review, the Council also took a number of decisions\(^6\) in regard to its programme of work.

12. In the context of the continued restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and in pursuance of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular Assembly resolutions 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and 52/12 B of 19 December 1997, the Council adopted a number of resolutions.

(b) Special sessions

13. At its substantive session of 1995, the Council decided\(^7\) that the Commission for Social Development should hold a special session in 1996 in order, inter alia, (a) to review its mandate, terms of reference and scope of work, (b) to elaborate its multi-year programme of work and (c) to review the frequency of its meetings and make recommendations thereon to the Council. (See paragraph 22 below.)

---

14. At its substantive session of 1999, the Council approved\(^8\) the holding of two additional three-week sessions of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as two additional one-week meetings of the pre-sessional working group in 2000 and 2001, and requested that the sessions be used entirely for the consideration of reports of the States parties in order to reduce the backlog of reports.

**(c) Date of sessions**

**(d) Place of sessions**

2. **AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL**

15. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Council took a number of decisions on the adoption of its agenda and other organizational matters related to the work of its sessions.\(^9\)

16. The Council adopted themes for consideration at its high-level segments,\(^10\) its coordination segments,\(^11\) its humanitarian affairs segments\(^12\) and the high-level meeting of its

---

operational activities segment.¹³ The Council did not adopt a theme for the operational activities segment of its 2000 substantive session; however, it adopted¹⁴ a sectoral theme for consideration at that session.

**3. METHOD OF SELECTING THE PRESIDENT

**4. POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

**5. LIMITATION OF DEBATE

**6. OFFICIAL AND WORKING LANGUAGES

**7. NATURE OF RECORDS

8. PARTICIPATION IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE COUNCIL

**(a) Members and non-members of the United Nations

**(b) Specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations¹⁵

(c) Non-governmental organizations

17. At its substantive session of 1996, the Council approved¹⁶ new arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations, updating those originally set out in its resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968. Category I was renamed “general consultative status” and Category II was renamed “special consultative status”.

¹⁵ See paras. 6 and 7 above.
18. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Council also took a number of decisions\(^{17}\) on consultative status of non-governmental organizations. The Council granted general consultative status to 50 organizations, special consultative status to 481 organizations and roster status to 129 organizations. It reclassified 15 non-governmental organizations from special to general consultative status, 2 organizations from roster to general consultative status and 12 organizations from roster to special consultative status.

\*\*\* (d) Other cases of participation in the deliberations of the Council

7. RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMISSIONS OF THE COUNCIL

(a) Functional commissions\(^{18}\)

19. At its organizational session for 1995, the Economic and Social Council, taking note of General Assembly resolution 49/128 of 19 December 1994, endorsed\(^{19}\) the decisions of the Assembly in paragraphs 24 and 25 of the resolution that the Population Commission should be renamed the Commission on Population and Development and that it should meet annually.

20. At its substantive session of 1995, the Council authorized\(^{20}\) the holding of two annual sessions by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, each of three weeks’


\(^{18}\) In the present article, the collective term “functional commissions” is understood to mean the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council as well as its standing committees and expert groups.


duration, in addition to a pre-sessional working group of five members to meet for five days immediately after each session to prepare the list of issues for consideration at the subsequent session.

21. At its resumed substantive session of 1995, the Council decided that the membership of the Commission on Population and Development should be increased from 27 to 47, according to the following pattern: (a) twelve members from African States; (b) eleven members from Asian States; (c) five members from Eastern European States; (d) nine members from Latin American and Caribbean States; and (e) ten members from Western European and other States.

22. At its substantive session of 1996, the Council decided that the Commission for Social Development should be composed of 46 members elected from among the States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies according to the following pattern: (a) twelve seats for African States; (b) ten seats for Asian States; (c) nine seats for Latin American and Caribbean States; (d) five seats for Eastern European States; and (e) ten seats for Western European and other States. The Council also decided that the Commission should meet annually, beginning in 1997.

23. At its substantive session of 1999, the Council decided that the Statistical Commission should meet annually.

24. At the same session, the Council, recalling its resolution 1987/21 of 26 May 1987, in which it had decided that, commencing with the thirty-second session of the Commission on the

---

Status of Women, the Commission should meet annually until the year 2000, decided\textsuperscript{24} that the Commission should continue to meet annually thereafter.

25. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1995, the Council also continued the review of its subsidiary bodies. At its substantive session of 1996, it reaffirmed\textsuperscript{25} that the review of the mandates, composition, functions and working methods of its functional commissions and expert groups and bodies should be completed by the fifty-second session of the Assembly. That review continued at the Council’s substantive session of 1997.\textsuperscript{26}

26. The culmination of the review took place at the substantive session of 1998. The Council decided:\textsuperscript{27}

(a) The Commission on Science and Technology for Development should remain a functional commission of the Council and should continue to meet biennially;

(b) The membership of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development should be reduced from 53 to 33 with the following geographical distribution: eight members from African States, seven members from Asian States, six members from Latin American and Caribbean States, four members from Eastern European States and eight members from Western European and other States;

(c) The Committee for Development Planning should be renamed the Committee for Development Policy and should continue to be a subsidiary body of the Council;

(d) The Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources should be merged into a single expert

\textsuperscript{24} E S C decision 1999/257 of 28 July 1999, E/1999/SR.43.
body, to be named the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development, which should serve as a subsidiary body of the Council.

**(b) Regional commissions

**10. SUSPENSION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COUNCIL