

1989/114. Further measures for the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/77 on the revitalization of the Council

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 42/170 of 11 December 1987, 42/211 of 21 December 1987, 43/174 of 9 December 1988 and 43/213 of 21 December 1988, concerning the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations,

Aware that the reform of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations is a continuing process aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations in dealing with economic and social issues and requires further attention,

Reaffirming its resolution 1988/77 of 29 July 1988 on the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council, endorsed by the General Assembly in decision 43/432 of 20 December 1988,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council,⁸⁰

Concerned that some of the provisions of Council resolution 1988/77 have not been implemented,

Concerned also that the documentation submitted to the Council in 1989 was distributed with considerable delay, contravening rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the Council,⁸¹ which states, *inter alia*, that documentation relating to an item of the agenda shall be circulated six weeks before the opening of the regular session,

1. Notes that the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system have expressed their readiness to contribute fully to the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council;⁸²

2. Requests the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts towards the full implementation of all relevant provisions of Council resolution 1988/77 and also to implement fully the present resolution;

I. MAJOR POLICY THEMES AND THEMATIC ANALYSES

3. Decides to consider at its organizational session for 1990 the establishment, on a provisional basis, of a multi-year work programme identifying major policy themes for in-depth consideration each year in accordance with paragraphs 2 (a) (ii), 2 (a) (iii) and 2 (e) (iii) of Council resolution 1988/77, in order to enable the Council, under the authority of the General Assembly, to exercise effectively its functions and powers as set out in the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions of the Assembly and the Council; the multi-year work programme should be updated and adjusted as and when necessary;

4. Decides that the thematic analyses referred to in paragraphs 2 (a) (ii) and 2 (e) (iii) of Council resolution 1988/77, which shall replace the present cross-organizational programme analyses as from 1991, should be made available to the Council in all official languages at least eight weeks in advance of a session;

5. Further decides that the thematic analyses should review existing activities and be forward-looking in identifying policy options; they should also:

(a) Describe the issue and the relationships between fields, sectors and activities of the bodies of the United Nations system concerned;

(b) Provide information on recent conclusions and recommendations of the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system concerned;

(c) Review relevant policy decisions and recent, ongoing and planned programmatic activities relating to the theme and their system-wide implementation, highlighting practical problems encountered;

(d) Identify emerging problems and the potential need for action by the United Nations system;

(e) Draw attention, as appropriate, to both social and economic aspects of the selected policy theme;

(f) Recommend substantive and programmatic steps to promote complementarities, co-operation and joint activities, fill gaps and reduce duplication in the United Nations system;

(g) Propose co-ordinated measures to translate legislative mandates and overall guidelines into programmes, taking into account the structure of the United Nations system and the respective areas of competence of its organizations;

(h) Propose monitoring arrangements;

6. Decides, in the context of its consideration of major policy themes, to review the functioning of the relevant subsidiary bodies with a view to developing common approaches to co-ordination, monitoring and follow-up;

7. Invites Member States to be represented in the discussions on major policy themes at an appropriately high level, with a view to the effective consideration of each theme;

8. Invites the executive heads of organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to participate actively in the in-depth discussions on major policy themes and to co-operate closely with the Secretary-General in the preparation of the thematic analyses;

⁸⁰ E/1989/95.

⁸¹ E/5715/Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.9).

⁸² See E/1989/95, annex I

II. DOCUMENTATION

9. *Notes* that it is important to improve the quality and reduce the length of documents submitted to the Council and subsidiary bodies in the economic, social and related fields and to avoid overwhelming the Council with excessive documentation;

10. *Decides* that the President of the Council and other members of the Bureau should continually monitor, with the assistance of the Secretariat, the status of the preparation of documentation, taking into account relevant decisions on documentation, and should propose appropriate measures to the Council, after having held informal meetings to be convened at least eight weeks before each regular session of the Council, bearing in mind the need to adhere to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the Council and other relevant rules and regulations;

11. *Invites* all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to provide the Council with all the necessary input and support, particularly material required for the preparation of thematic analyses and consolidated reports, and requests the specialized agencies to continue to submit annually to the Council executive summaries of their activities;

12. *Requests* its subsidiary bodies to highlight policy recommendations and decisions resulting from their deliberations for consideration and appropriate action by the Council, and recommends that the General Assembly request its subsidiary bodies reporting through the Council to do the same;

13. *Emphasizes* that all reports submitted to the Council should be prefaced by a summary outlining the main issues addressed and the conclusions and recommendations;

14. *Urges* its subsidiary bodies to implement fully Council resolution 1979/41 of 10 May 1979 in submitting to the Council for consideration their provisional agendas together with the lists of requested documentation, with a view to ensuring greater consistency in requests for documentation and improving reporting procedures, and recommends that the General Assembly request its subsidiary bodies reporting through the Council to do the same;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, when introducing new information technologies, to take into account the need to improve the availability of documentation and to reduce the quantity of paper stored and distributed to the Council;

16. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report made orally by the Chairman of the open-ended task force on documentation³³ established by the Council in its decision 1989/105 of 5 May 1989, and requests the task force to continue its work with a view to submitting concrete recommendations to the Council at its organizational session for 1990, taking duly into account the relevant provisions of the present resolution;

17. *Decides* to consider at its organizational session for 1990 the proposed format of the report of the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly;³⁴

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

18. *Recommends* that the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session request its subsidiary bodies reporting through the Council to make proposals that will provide adequate time for their reports to be considered by the Council;

19. *Requests* the General Assembly, with the assistance of the Committee on Conferences, to approve and adjust the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1990 and 1991, bearing in mind the recommendation in paragraph 18 above;

20. *Decides* that, in order to ensure that it is fully effective and substantive, the general discussion on international economic and social policy, including regional and sectoral developments, should not exceed four days and that statements made should not exceed fifteen minutes;

21. *Affirms* that the President of the Council may prepare a summary of the major conclusions of the general discussion;

22. *Decides* that, after the conclusion of all the statements in the general discussion, one day should be devoted to an informal exchange of views among members of the Council, with the active participation of the executive heads of the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system concerned;

23. *Decides* that the sessional committees shall not begin their substantive work until the conclusion of the general discussion and that, to the extent possible, those committees should devote more time to a constructive dialogue on the agenda items under consideration, with the active participation of representatives of the organizations of the United Nations system concerned, and decides to consider at its organizational session for 1990 modalities for implementing these arrangements, taking into account the need to ensure that its sessions are not prolonged;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Council in sufficient time for consideration at its organizational session for 1990 proposals for:

(a) A draft six-year work programme on major policy themes in the economic and social sectors as referred to in paragraph 2 (e) (iii) of Council resolution 1988/77;

(b) A biennial programme of work, with the adjustments in agenda and documentation necessary for the full implementation of Council resolution 1988/77 and the present resolution;

³³ See E/1989/SR.31.

³⁴ E/1989/95, annex IV.

(c) Modalities for the in-depth discussions on major policy themes, possibly in a high-level segment of the Council;

IV SUBSTANTIVE SUPPORT

25. *Requests* the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, in accordance with its mandate and acting as a subsidiary body of the Council, to continue to assist the Council in formulating appropriate recommendations relating to the programmatic and co-ordination aspects of relevant activities of the Council;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in order to implement fully and effectively Council resolution 1988/77 and the present resolution, to take the following points into consideration in providing secretariat support for the Council, as referred to in paragraph 2 (g) of Council resolution 1988/77:

(a) There should be an organizationally distinct and identifiable secretariat structure for providing substantive support in regard to the preparation of thematic analyses and consolidated reports;

(b) The expertise of other organizations of the United Nations system should be drawn upon, as appropriate;

(c) Such secretariat support should be provided, as appropriate, *inter alia*, within existing resources through redeployment of staff and the use of extrabudgetary resources.

*37th plenary meeting
28 July 1989*