

# III

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL

### *Survey of the Economic and Social Council*

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was established by the United Nations Charter (Articles 60-72) and is one of the principal organs of the United Nations having a status comparable in the economic and social spheres to that of the Security Council in the political field. It is composed of 18 members, elected by the General Assembly for staggered terms of three years, one-third of the seats on the Council being filled by elections each year. The Council is the United Nations body responsible to the General Assembly for the whole field of international economic and social activity.

Canada was one of the first members of the Council and served on it from 1946-48, from 1950-52 and again from 1956-58. While Canada has not been a member of the Council since then, Canadian participation in the Council's functional commissions and in the United Nations Specialized Agencies (that is, those inter-governmental agencies which have negotiated agreements with the United Nations) remained extensive during the past year. (For details of Canadian membership on ECOSOC, functional commissions and selected standing committees and special bodies see Appendix II).

#### Functions

Article 1(3) of the Charter states, among other things, that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character. This task has been delegated to the Council which is responsible for the whole field of international economic and social activity, and is the co-ordinator of the economic and social programmes carried on by the United Nations and its various agencies and bodies. In order to carry out its responsibilities the Council was given the authority to initiate studies; make recommendations to the United Nations, member states and the Specialized Agencies; prepare draft comments; call conferences; enter into agreements with the Specialized Agencies and perform services at the request of member states, the Specialized Agencies and the Security Council. ECOSOC receives regular reports from the Specialized Agencies, the regional economic commissions, the functional commissions and bodies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Relief and