

the Charter must be related to the difficulties of the world political situation as a whole, and to the inherent diversity of the problems themselves. Nevertheless, much more remains to be done if the Economic and Social Council is to play its full part in the achievement of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

The Council held its fifteenth session from March 31 to April 28, 1953. While discordant notes were still heard in the debates at this session, they were even fewer than at the previous one. The Soviet Representative, speaking at the close of the session, described it as a period of transition which might be followed by genuine international economic co-operation. Though the absence of extreme bitterness in debate was a welcome development, the discussions which took place were confined to routine matters. Major items such as the financing of economic development, and human rights, were left for examination by the Council at its seventeenth session, which is scheduled to begin on January 10, 1954.

One of the highlights of the session was the debate on the world economic situation, which is discussed in detail below. Decisions of the Council included a resolution instructing the Secretary-General to convene by 1954 a conference for the conclusion of international conventions relating to customs formalities for the importation of private vehicles and for tourism; a recommendation proposing to the General Assembly the transfer to the United Nations of certain functions formerly carried out by the League of Nations with regard to the control of slavery, and a request that the Human Rights Commission continue to prepare recommendations concerning international respect for the right of self-determination.

Canada was not represented at the fifteenth session of the Economic and Social Council since its second term as a member expired on December 31, 1952. The sixteenth session of the Council opened in Geneva on June 30, 1953 and therefore falls outside the scope of this volume.

World Economic Situation

Each year the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) devotes a part of its time to a wide-ranging debate on the world economic situation. This usually takes place at the opening of the session and sets the framework for the subsequent discussion of individual economic questions on the agenda. Since the Council is not a negotiating body, and other international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the signatories to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the Organization for the European Economic Co-operation are available to deal with specific aspects of international economic relations, the annual debate in ECOSOC is normally general in character and may or may not result in resolutions directing the attention of members to particular aspects of the changing world economic position. It is nevertheless useful in focussing attention on the trends and issues in the economic field which are engaging the attention of the governments. While there is a wide variety of viewpoints, similarities of approach can usually be discerned among the under-developed countries, among