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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL

Survey of the Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council, one of the principal organs of the United Nations, consists of 18 members of the United Nations, elected by the General Assembly to serve for staggered terms of three years; one-third of the seats on the Council are filled by elections each year. Canada, one of the original members of the Council, served on it from 1946-48 and again from 1950-52. After a three-year absence, Canada was again elected to ECOSOC membership commencing on January 1, 1956. In 1956, Canadian Delegations attended the twenty-first session of the Council in New York in April, the twenty-second session in Geneva in July, and a short resumed twenty-second session in New York in December held to dispose of business arising out of decisions taken by the General Assembly which had to be dealt with by the end of the year.

The Economic and Social Council is responsible, under the Charter of the United Nations, and under the authority of the General Assembly for promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development. It makes or initiates studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters and makes recommendations regarding them to the General Assembly, to the members of the United Nations, and to the Specialized Agencies concerned. It is responsible for promoting universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, for preparing draft conventions for submission to the General Assembly and for calling international conferences on matters falling within its competence. It also concerns itself with the co-ordination of the activities of the Specialized Agencies, from which it receives regular reports.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the Economic and Social Council has the assistance of a variety of subsidiary organs, including its eight functional commissions, three regional economic commissions, standing committees such as the Technical Assistance Committee and the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, special bodies such as the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Permanent Central Opium Board and the Drug Supervisory Body, and the Technical Assistance Board. In addition, the Council and its subsidiary organs establish *ad hoc* committees as required from time to time for specific purposes.

Many of the subjects examined by the Council are later discussed in the General Assembly at its regular session in the autumn. Recommendations from the Council dealing with economic subjects are considered by the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee of the Assembly; those which cover social, humanitarian and cultural subjects are considered by the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee; and the financial aspects of ECOSOC recommendations are reviewed by the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee.