

To say that the Council has no further detailed responsibilities in these spheres is not to say that it has no work to do. In fact its role has become both more complex and more difficult to discharge satisfactorily. In the first instance, it has a legislative obligation with respect to its Functional Commissions and subsidiary committees; the resolutions of these bodies must be approved as decisions of the Council if they are to take effect on an international level. Speaking for my own delegation, we think this task should be discharged with considerable restraint when it comes to revising the recommended texts, and with debate which avoids the temptation of merely recording once again national positions for the record.

Secondly, there will always be areas where action is required but which do not fall readily into the terms of reference of any of the specialized bodies. These areas will necessarily come under the direct jurisdiction of the Council, which will, by consequence, play the action role. Here, too, one would hope for a firm sense of perspective. There will be those topics which, essential in themselves, will not be of major importance when we draw up the balance-sheet of progress in the development process. Conversely, in other areas it may become clear that something more is needed than an annual and necessarily curtailed debate in the Council.

These responsibilities need not and indeed should not amount to the major work of ECOSOC. But when the urgent problems have been dealt with by the specialist subsidiaries, what remains to be done apart from the necessary job of electing the members of those subsidiaries, and ironing out conflicts in the annual pattern of conferences? To us it seems that the major and crucial role for ECOSOC will come in assessing and co-ordinating the efforts of the entire international community directed towards the process of development.

Development, both economic and social, requires expertise and sustained attention. By creating specialized subsidiaries, we have gone a long way towards meeting that need. In dealing with one problem, we have, however, created another - ensuring that the specialists work within some generally approved overall pattern without conflict or friction. If we are to make any sense of the notion of a joint effort or a common system, there must be some one body which attempts to assess the process of development in all its aspects. The job must be done, but why ECOSOC? In part because the United Nations itself as an agency is engaged in so many action areas directed towards the ultimate goal of development that it needs at all times to keep an eye on the nature of the forest. It is not enough to work on the theory that if you have many strong trees the forest will take care of itself. The United Nations is an agency, but not an agency like any other, and it is the Charter responsibility of this Council to advise the United Nations about what is going on in the economic and social fields.

None of this is new. Indeed the most significant developments in the Council's work in the past two years have taken place precisely in the field of co-ordination - the insistence on priorities and planning in the work of the Functional Commissions, the attendance of Council officers at meetings of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, the continuing efforts to work out a coherent and comprehensible work programme for the United Nations, the compilation and codification of work completed or in