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## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL

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

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) 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 eighteen members elected by the General Assembly who serve for staggered terms of three years, one-third of the seats on the Council being filled by elections each year. 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 intergovernmental agencies which have negotiated agreements with the United Nations) remained extensive during the past year.

It is largely through the Council and its subsidiary organs that the United Nations endeavours to promote higher standards of living and conditions of economic and social progress. There are seven Functional Commissions of ECOSOC and one Sub-commission (that on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities). These Commissions are responsible for work programmes in specific fields and include the Population Commission, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Commission on International Commodity Trade, on all of which Canada served in 1960, the Statistical Commission, the Social Commission and the Human Rights Commission.

When the United Nations Charter was drafted, it was recognized that there was need for a body which would be responsible to the General Assembly for the whole field of international economic and social activity, and would be the co-ordinator of the economic, social and relief programmes carried out by the United Nations and its various agencies. Besides initiating programmes, therefore, the Council has an important co-ordinating function to fulfil. The Technical Assistance Committee (TAC), a standing committee of the Council, has general responsibility in the field of technical assistance. Among the various bodies which are concerned with economic assistance matters are the Special Fund and the International Development Association which were formed as a result of discussions in ECOSOC and the General Assembly. In addition, four regional Economic Commissions—for Europe,