

Canadian Statement on December 16 in the Second Committee
on Agenda Item 96:
Review and Reappraisal of the Role and Functions of ECOSOC

Mr. Chairman,

It is an honour for me to introduce on behalf of the delegations of Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Gabon, India, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria and the Canadian delegation the draft resolution contained in document A/C.2/L.838/Rev.1. I shall not take much of the Committee's time in introducing this draft resolution since there is little time left. In any case, members of the Committee will be aware that the purpose of this resolution is simply to dispose, in the most expeditious way possible, of an item which we have not had the opportunity to discuss at this session. I shall not, of course, attempt to comment on the substance of this question -- to which all of us attach great importance -- since we do not have the necessary time to examine it in detail.

Members of the Committee may recall that in two statements to the Economic and Social Council at its thirty-seventh session, the Secretary-General advocated a review and reappraisal of the functions and machinery of the United Nations in the economic and social fields and, in particular, of the Council. He expressed the hope that the Council would proceed to that task with the utmost frankness. As a result of this initiative by the Secretary General, the Council at its thirty-eighth session invited member states to submit their views on this question. The comments of member states formed a useful background for the Council's discussions during the thirty-ninth session. At that session, the Council, in its resolution 1091, stated its conviction that the great increase in the activities of the United Nations and its related agencies in the economic, social and human rights fields necessitated a thorough review and reappraisal of its own role and functions. The summary records of the thirty-ninth session show that a long and useful discussion was held about various ways in which the Council might improve its working methods. However, the Council did more than simply talk about how it might improve its operations and its procedures. As will be seen from resolutions 1092 and 1093, the Council took certain steps so that it might better meet its growing responsibilities resulting from the increase in the range and type of work of the United Nations family in the economic and social fields. I refer here to the decision taken by the Council to reorganize and enlarge its Special Committee for Co-ordination and to establish new relations between it and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. I also refer to the decisions to make evaluation of technical assistance programmes more effective, to bring documentation into more manageable proportions, to ensure adequate secretariat support for the important work of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, and to establish a more meaningful relationship between budgetary resources and programmes.