

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.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FROM 1763 TO 1863

The first part of the book deals with the early years of the American colonies, from 1763 to 1776. It covers the period of the Seven Years' War, the American Revolution, and the early years of the new nation. The second part of the book deals with the years from 1776 to 1863, covering the period of the American Civil War and the Reconstruction era.

The book is written in a clear and concise style, and is suitable for students of American history. It provides a comprehensive overview of the major events and figures of the period, and is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of the United States.

Mr. Chairman, as the draft resolution now before us notes, the comments submitted by thirty-three member states and those made by members of the Council during the thirty-ninth session have been brought together in an analytical summary in document A/5920 in response to ECOSOC resolution 1091. I should also like to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the useful report submitted by the Secretary-General in response to resolution 1091. That report, contained in document A/6109, contains the views and recommendations of the Secretary-General himself on how the current review and reappraisal of the Council's role and functions might best proceed. The Secretary-General also states that he will have further suggestions to make. We are pleased that documents A/5920 and A/6109 will be available to the Economic and Social Council at its forty-first session and we hope that the Council will also have the benefit of the Secretary-General's further suggestions, as requested in the operative paragraph of our draft resolution.

Mr. Chairman, the draft resolution takes note of the useful suggestions which have been made both by member states and by the Secretary-General to date. On this sure foundation, the Council at its forty-first session can base its further discussions of its current role and functions and the twenty-first session of the General Assembly should, as a result, be well equipped for an examination of this question if it decides to undertake one. The operative paragraph should give a further impetus to the Council's discussions by requesting from the Secretary-General detailed proposals on ways in which he believes the Council might best adapt its procedures and working methods so as to enable it effectively to meet its current responsibilities. In preparing this report, the Secretary-General will of course take into account the consensus of views of member states, reflected in document A/5920. In accordance with the decision of the Fifth Committee yesterday, contained in document A/C.2/L.858, the Secretary-General will consult with the Administrative Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in fulfilling the request we are making of him. The Secretary-General will also have available to him the comments of the Third Committee which are referred to in document A/C.2/L.853. All these comments and the Secretary-General's report will be available both to the forty-first session of the Council and to the twenty-first session of the General Assembly. In this way, Mr. Chairman, the present task of reshaping the Council's working methods and its procedures to meet new challenges should proceed without delay.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to note that while this Committee has not had an opportunity to examine the question of the review and reappraisal of ECOSOC, it is open to all member states to submit their views as a result of the decision of the thirty-eighth session of the Council. As I have already noted, thirty-three member states have responded to this invitation. It is the hope of the thirteen co-sponsors of the draft resolution now before the Committee that the Council will have the benefit of the comments of many more member states when it holds its summer session in six months' time.



Mr. Chairman, I should now like to turn to the actual terms of the draft resolution itself. Since this Committee has not had the opportunity to consider Item 96, we, the co-sponsors, have attempted to consult informally with as many members of this Committee as we could about the terms of the draft resolution. These informal discussions led the original co-sponsors of the draft resolution to modify certain passages which resulted in document L.838/Rev.1. Further informal conversations have led the co-sponsors to propose a few additional modifications which, we hope and believe, will ensure the smooth adoption of this resolution now.

Specifically, we should like to make the following changes in the draft resolution: two small amendments first and then a more extensive one. In the fourth preambular paragraph, the word "particular" should be inserted before the word "responsibilities". In the final preambular paragraph, it has been suggested to us that the words "with appreciation" might be deleted. We have agreed since the Committee has not had time to examine the Secretary-General's report, it might not be appropriate to say that we had noted the Secretary-General's report "with appreciation". The more extensive modification which the co-sponsors are willing to make concerns the sixth preambular paragraph. In that paragraph, it was noted that a number of member states, in their comments on the role and functions of the Economic and Social Council, related the Council's work to the following three broad fields of responsibility

- governing body for the activities of the United Nations proper in the economic, social and human rights fields;
- co-ordinator of the activities of the United Nations family in those fields; and
- forum for the discussion and formulation of broad international economic and social policy.

Members of this Committee who followed the work of the Council's Special Committee on Co-ordination at its last session will recall that from those discussions there emerged something of a consensus on these three points. These areas of responsibility were also taken as points of departure for the interventions of a number of delegations at last summer's session of the Council. A sizeable number of member states also endorsed these three guidelines in their written comments, as will be seen from document E/4052 and addenda 1 to 16 and document A/5920.

The co-sponsors believed it was useful to note this development in the preambular section of the draft resolution. However, one or two delegations have suggested to us that it would be inappropriate to include this paragraph since this Committee has not had the opportunity of examining Item 96 on our agenda. We are, therefore, willing to delete the sixth preambular paragraph.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the other members of the Committee for listening to this somewhat long introduction of what is, in fact, a short resolution. The thirteen co-sponsors hope that all members of this Committee will now feel able to join with us in the adoption of this resolution.

