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Economic and Social Council
2003 Organizational Session
5th Meeting (AM)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, PREPARING FOR GENEVA SUBSTANTIVE SESSION, ADOPTS HUMANITARIAN SEGMENT THEMES, OPERATIONAL SEGMENT WORK PROGRAMME

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) completed the remaining organizational matters for its 2003 substantive session to be held in Geneva from 30 June to 25 July, by deciding on the theme for the humanitarian affairs segment, and the work programme of the operational activities segment.

Following a report by the Council's Vice-President, Valery P. Kuchinsky (Ukraine), on the outcome of consultations yesterday on the theme for the humanitarian affairs segment, the Council adopted a draft decision by which it agreed that the theme would be: "Strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance, with particular attention to humanitarian financing and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, and transition from relief to development".

The Council also agreed to hold a panel, within the framework of that theme, on "Responding to the effects of HIV/AIDS and other widespread diseases on humanitarian relief operations".

The work programme for the operational activities segment was also agreed upon. In the morning of 3 July, there will be a high-level panel on resources for operational activities for development, reviewing the progress made on the issue of funding of development cooperation activities of the United Nations. In the afternoon, it will hold a dialogue with heads of funds and programmes.

On 4 July, a panel will be convened in the morning on an impartial and independent assessment of the extent to which the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies at the field level learn lessons from their evaluations and to formulate proposals on how to improve the feedback mechanisms at the field level.

A discussion will be held in the afternoon with United Nations country teams on their experience in promoting an integrated approach to rural development for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/201 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations will be reviewed in morning and afternoon meetings on 7 July.

In other business today, the ECOSOC decided that the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on International cooperation in Tax Measures would meet in Geneva from 10 to 14 November.

Following a brief suspension of the meeting to consult on the appointment of members to the Committee on Negotiations with Intergovernmental Agencies, as contained in a letter from the President to the Secretary-General (document E/2003/12), the Council accepted a proposal of the Chairman for regional groups to determine whether any additional countries were interested in joining. It was agreed that the deadline for concluding consideration of that matter was 25 March.

The Council also granted observer status to two intergovernmental organizations wishing to participate in the Council's work. They were: the Intergovernmental Institution for the Use of Micro-alga Spirulina against malnutrition (document E/2002/3); and the Common Fund for Commodities (document E/2003/10).

Also today, the Council President reported on the spring meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. He announced a series of dates for preparatory meetings for the high-level segment of the substantive session and would soon issue an outline for the format of those meetings.

The Economic and Social Council will meet again at a date and time to be announced.

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