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FOLLOW-UP TO THE AGREED CONCLUSIONS OF THE ECOSOC HIGH  
LEVEL AND COORDINATION SEGMENTS AND TO ITS RESOLUTIONS

Note by the United Nations Statistics Division

1. The Agreed conclusions of ECOSOC 1998 are set out in the Report of the Economic and Social Council for the year 1998 (A/53/3).
2. While there were no agreed conclusions under the High-level segment, there was a Ministerial Communique and Summary of the segment by the President of the Council. The Communique related to developments since the Uruguay Round, implications opportunities and challenges, in particular for the developing countries and the least developed among them, in the context of globalization and liberalization. The Summary related to developments in the world economy, the Asian crisis, and multilateralism and liberalization of world trade. The Communique and Summary did not suggest or require specific action by the Commission.
3. Under the Coordination Segment, Agreed Conclusions were published. The Agreed Conclusions relate to the coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including gender related aspects. In the Agreed Conclusions the ECOSOC calls upon its functional commissions, as well as the regional commissions and other organizations, bodies and specialized agencies, within their respective mandates, to take full human rights fully into account in their respective activities (I, para. 4). However, no further specific action is called for than the Commission has already taken under agenda item 6 Statistical implications of recent major United Nations conferences, agenda items 4 on demographic, social and migration statistics, and mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the UN system; fostering an enabling environment for development, financial flows, including capital flows, investment and trade and; coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication (see E/CN.3/1999/20, paras 20-26). The statement in paras. 20-26 were made by the Working Group in considering the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions of 1997.

4. The resolutions of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session are set out in document E/1998/INF/3/Add.2 and Add.3. Two are of concern to the Commission, namely resolution 1998/44 on Integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits and 1998/46 Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic social and related fields.

5. Resolution 1998/44 in particular (para. II.5) calls for ECOSOC to review the outcomes of the functional commissions on the basis of an integrated report by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will ensure that appropriate outcomes of Statistical Commission sessions are included.

6. Resolution 1998/46 is addressed mainly to the follow-up of United Nations conferences but also has general applicability.

7. ECOSOC welcomed the review of working methods being undertaken by the Statistical Commission and other functional commissions and considered that each Commission should adopt practices best suited to its mandate and responsibilities (Annex II, para.1).

8. ECOSOC stresses the crucial role of the Bureau of a functional commission, and makes suggestion concerning the election and activities of the Bureau and contact with the ECOSOC Bureau (Annex II, B paras. 14-17).

9. ECOSOC also stresses participation of high level government officials and NGOs (Annex II, C).

10. It also gives guidelines about documentation content, length, timeliness etc. It requests functional commissions, at the conclusion of each session to address whether the outputs of the session should be brought to the attention of other functional commissions (Annex II, D).

11. It also provides advice about the type of report and conclusions that functional commissions should reach (Annex II, E).

12. The ECOSOC also calls for functional commissions to work within their mandates, and cooperate with each other (Annex II, F and G).

13. The ECOSOC also stresses the importance of the regional commissions and calls for linking the activities of the regional commissions more effectively with the overall activities of the United Nations in the economic and social areas (Annex III, A

para.6). Greater cooperation between regional commissions and functional commissions is called for (Annex III, C para. 16).

14. The above summarizes the UNSD review of the agreed conclusions and resolutions of ECOSOC in 1998; the efforts of the Commission are very consistent with the views expressed by the ECOSOC, as follows:

The Commission has reviewed its functioning on a number of occasions and introduced improvements; a further review is scheduled under agenda item 10 of the present session including review of a proposal by an ad hoc group of members and the Commission's own Working Group to meet annually rather than every second year; the Bureau of the Commission has always played a crucial role particularly through the functioning of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination of which the Bureau comprises the core membership; the Bureau of the Commission will meet with the Bureau of ECOSOC on Thursday 4 March 1999 to try to find ways to improve their interaction; the government representatives on the Commission are nearly always the Directors-General of the national statistical offices; the Commission has made its documents concise, issue oriented and they are largely available in all languages at the time of the Commission; issues are referred by the Commission to other functional commissions as appropriate; the Commission adopts a decision-oriented report of its sessions; it also works within its mandate and cooperates with other functional commissions as needed; the regional commissions participate fully in the work of the Commission.

15. In addition there is a decision of the Council, namely, Decision 1998/290 on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic social and related fields. By this decision the Council decided to hold an informal meeting to consider the work being done on basic indicators. Preparations for that meeting and related decisions of the Commission were discussed earlier under agenda item 6 and no further action is called for by the Commission at this time.

16. Copies of the above referenced ministerial communique, summary by the President of ECOSOC, Agreed conclusions, resolutions and decision are available on request.