



**Governing Council
of the
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Development Programme**

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Items 2 and 6 of the provisional agenda

TERMS OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
AND
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Note by the secretariat

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2813 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, the Economic and Social Council is required to elect each year 16 members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme for a three-year term from among States Members of the United Nations or members of specialized agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency. When electing members of the Governing Council in accordance with this General Assembly resolution, the Economic and Social Council has until now elected members for a three year term beginning on 1 January subsequent to the election and ending on 31 December three years later.
2. Until 1980, the Governing Council elected its Bureau in January, at the first of its then two annual meetings. When the Council decided to hold only one annual session in June, it suspended the previous practice and elected its officers at the beginning of each regular annual session.
3. Recognizing that this situation created some practical inconveniences, the Governing Council in 1981, by paragraph 3(d) of its decision 81/37, decided to hold an organizational meeting of one or two days' duration at the beginning of February of each year in New York to elect its Bureau and to consider, if necessary, organizational matters.

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4. The rationale for this innovation was given in document DP/562, paragraph 33 of which stated:

"The term of office of the Bureau normally continues until its successor is elected the following June. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2813 (XXVI), however, the term of office of one third of the members of the Governing Council expires on 31 December each year. Thus, there may be instances where a Government's membership in the Council expires while its representative is a member of the Bureau. Also, while the term of office of the one third of the membership of the Governing Council elected each year during the first regular session of the Economic and Social Council nominally starts on 1 January of the next year, the actual association of these newly elected members with the Council takes place only in June of that year, i.e., 14 months after their election. Taking into account the General Assembly resolution mentioned above, a recommendation is submitted for consideration of the Council which will enable the Council to elect its Bureau at the beginning of February of each year, thus enabling the newly elected members of the Council to assume their role prior to the regular session which takes place in June. In this way, members can familiarize themselves with the questions to be considered at the normal regular session and the role of the Bureau between sessions of the Governing Council will be strengthened".

5. In recent years, the Governing Council has adopted several decisions aimed at strengthening its role. These decisions have led to frequent convening of Bureau meetings and of informal meetings of members of the Governing Council throughout the year. Given the present arrangements, as outlined in paragraph 3 above, the Bureau's authority, however, expires on 31 December of any given year. Accordingly, during the period 1 January until the organizational meeting in February no bureau is legally constituted. This void could be seen as an impediment to the proper functions of the Council and its Bureau and, thus, the Council may wish to consider how such a hiatus could in future be avoided.

6. Following consultations with the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, a pertinent recommendation by the Governing Council to the Economic and Social Council appears to be the most appropriate course of action to rectify the present situation. Such a recommendation could read as follows:

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"The Governing Council recommends to the Economic and Social Council that in electing members of the Governing Council pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2813 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, it decide that

'(a) Members of the Governing Council shall henceforth serve for a term of three years beginning with the organizational session of the Council in February of the year following the election and ending on the day preceding the organizational session in February three years later;^{1/}

'(b) The term of office of current members of the Governing Council be adjusted accordingly'."

Notes

^{1/} This recommendation, if adopted, would be in conformity with Governing Council decision 81/37, paragraph 3(d), whereby the Council decided to hold an organizational meeting of one or two days' duration at the beginning of February each year in New York.
