

Working Paper on implementation of the 2005 World Summit decisions regarding

Economic and Social Council

Introduction

1. The 2005 World Summit has expressed an unequivocal determination to ensure the full and timely realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Summit recognized that the UN can play this role effectively through a well coordinated and focused mechanism.

2. The Summit has also recognized the need for a more effective Economic and Social Council as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the international development goals agreed at the major United Nations summits and conferences, including the Millennium Development Goals. To this end, the ECOSOC should:

I. Policy dialogue and implementation

- i. Promote global dialogue and partnership on global policies and trends in the economic, social, environmental and humanitarian fields and to this end serve as a quality platform for high-level engagement among Member States and with the international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society on emerging global trends, policies and action and develop its ability to respond better and more rapidly to developments in the international economic, environmental and social fields;
- ii. Ensure follow-up of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the internationally agreed development goals, and hold annual ministerial-level substantive reviews to assess progress, drawing on its functional and regional commissions and other international institutions, in accordance with their respective mandates;

II. Development Cooperation Forum

- i. Hold a biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum to review trends in international development cooperation, including strategies, policies and financing, promote greater coherence among the development activities of different development partners and strengthen the links between the normative and operational work of the United Nations;

III. Coherence and Coordination Role

- i. Play a major role in the overall coordination of funds, programmes and agencies, ensuring coherence among them and avoiding duplication of mandates and activities. Such a role apart from ensuring policy coherence, should help realize, in practice, the goal of “one United Nations” and avoid duplication and waste of resources and allocate tasks to those agencies and organizations that have the best “comparative advantages” to undertake these.

IV. Response to Emergencies

- i. Support and complement international efforts aimed at addressing humanitarian emergencies, including natural disasters, in order to promote an improved, coordinated response from the United Nations;

V. Role in Peacebuilding Commission

- i. Contribute to a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation by effectively discharging the role envisaged for ECOSOC in the Peace-building Commission which, upon creation as decided by the 2005 Summit, should operationally report to both the Security Council and ECOSOC. Links between the work of the Council and Commission would need to be clearly articulated.

3. The Summit also emphasized that the agenda and the current methods of work of the Council should be adapted to enable it to fully perform these functions.

I. Suggested format for the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review and Assessment Process

4. Any review at ECOSOC should be voluntary in nature with countries giving an assessment of their progress or lack thereof under the aegis of the Council. This should be based on the comprehensive national development strategies that each country has agreed to adopt by 2006. The strategies are expected to be built around the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The **development matrix** to be devised by the UN should serve as the framework for tracking and assessing progress in implementation of agreed goals and commitments. This will allow for a country-driven process which can then be discussed at the regional and international levels under the auspices of ECOSOC and its regional commissions.

5. The review could be carried out in the following stages:

Stage 1:

6. The first stage of the review could consist of applying the framework to undertake self-evaluation, perhaps a national implementation report, by the country under review. In this undertaking, the country concerned, as appropriate, will be supported fully by the UN system organizations working at the country level. This phase includes work on documentation, data and analyses to be prepared by the country. At this stage, the data will also need to be gathered on the policies, programmes and practices of donors in the country in question.

7. In case of a donor country, its report will focus on the policies and programmes that are being pursued in various regions to support the realization of the UN development agenda. This stage of preparation should build upon other mechanisms already in place national, regional or international, such as the PRSPs, CCA-UNDAFs, NSDS, WB-CAS, as well as reports of regional development banks.

8. The UN country team led by the Resident Coordinator will have a key role in assisting countries to address the implementation of the whole development agenda in their reports.

Stage 2:

9. This phase could be grounded at the regional level. During this phase, the national reports could be reviewed at the level of regional commissions. The regional review would largely be focused on the trends and performance of the countries in the region towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals. At this stage, an analysis of the regional review and recommendations for action should also be added to the report for consideration by ECOSOC.

Stage 3:

10. The reports by the regional commissions together with a comprehensive report analysing the national trends, based on the national implementation reports, should be discussed at the ministerial level review meeting of the Council participated by Ministers of Development/Finance and the BWIs and WTO as well as representatives of other UN system organizations. The review should include the participation also of civil society and the private sector on the lines of the multistakeholder approach adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Expected Outcome

11. Outcome of the reviews should be in the form of an assessment of achievements and gaps and identification of the obstacles to achieving certain goals/targets. Recommendations could be made for specific actions at the national, regional or international levels that could resolve these issues.

II. Development Cooperation Forum

12. Presently, international development cooperation is not discussed in a UN forum as such. The deliberations are largely focused on the operational activities for development that are reviewed at two levels. Firstly, at the General Assembly **Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) of operational activities for development of the UN system**. Secondly, at the **operational activities segment of the Council**. While the existing UN mechanisms provide a politically neutral forum to review and negotiate the broad range of issues related to development cooperation of the UN system, the scope of their review is a) limited to the UN system; b) not comprehensive enough to cover the role and impact of the overall international development cooperation and c) largely attended by only directly related ministries, such as those of development cooperation. It also does not benefit directly from the experiences and inputs of other development actors, such as the World Bank, IMF, regional banks, regional commissions, bilateral donors (OECD), civil society and private sector, which are present at the country level.

13. The Development Cooperation Forum would help filling these gaps as well as promote the following **objectives**:

- (a) **Advance the understanding** of international development cooperation issues affecting the implementation of the UN development agenda and promote dialogue to find effective ways to support it;
- (b) **Promote coherence in international development cooperation**: The forum will promote coherence by bringing together all relevant development actors for policy discussions who normally interact at the operational level in a significant way
- (c) **Promote a better integration of policy responses** based on comprehensive approaches to development cooperation challenges supporting the implementation of the development agenda, including strengthening the link between normative and operational aspects.

Suggested format of the Development Cooperation Forum

14. The Forum could open with a global multi-stakeholder dialogue on the state of international development cooperation. This should be followed by discussions among the heads of governing bodies of various development cooperation bodies/organizations, a dialogue with the emerging actors on the development scene and interactive discussions among governments regarding their development cooperation policies and vision.

15. The Forum should (a) carry out comprehensive reviews of trends in international development cooperation, identifying key challenges and gaps and help develop integrated policy responses; (b) focus on issues affecting aid effectiveness –i.e. quantity and quality of resources; (c) provide a platform for sharing experiences, innovations and lessons learned on aid effectiveness among a broad range of development actors and stakeholders; (d) explore ways to promote greater development impact of international development cooperation –i.e. through greater coherence, coordination, and harmonization of policies and activities among various development actors relating to such key issues as aid, trade and debt and (e) strengthen linkages between normative and operational work.

16. A comprehensive analytical report on issues in international development cooperation and their implications for implementation of the UN development agenda should be prepared to provide basis for discussions at the Forum. Relevant reports from other development actors may also be made available to the Forum.

17. The forum should involve the participation of all development stakeholders, including ministers of development cooperation, high-level representatives of UN system organizations, DAC/OECD, World Bank, IMF, regional development banks, regional commissions and other relevant regional and sub-regional institutions and arrangements.

18. Preparations for the Forum could include regional and global inter-sessional consultations as well as some technical meetings with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders that should help in defining the focus areas for discussions at a particular session of the Forum.

Expected Outcome

19. The outcome of the Forum should be captured in a summary by the President of ECOSOC highlighting recommendations on (a) overall policy guidance to carry out effectively international development cooperation activities – i.e. resources, capacities, accountability, transparency, partnerships and national ownership; (b) modalities to

promote among various development actors alignment and harmonization of policies, strategies, approaches, frameworks and instruments for the achievement of the UN development agenda; (c) ways to enhance the overall governance and funding of international development cooperation; (d) emerging development issues that need further policy development and global consensus and (e) new initiatives by key actors like OECD/DAC, UN system organizations, BWIs, bilateral donors, programme countries regarding strengthening of the international development cooperation.

20. Since ECOSOC has been requested by the General Assembly to undertake a review of funding for development cooperation on a triennial basis (para. 23 of res. 59/250), it is suggested that such review be undertaken biennially as part of the Development Cooperation Forum starting from 2006.

III. Urgent and effective response to humanitarian emergencies and developments in the economic, social and environmental fields

21. There is a visible gap at the intergovernmental level to coordinate responses to emergencies and crises that require a comprehensive, coherent and timely response at the international level. There is a sense that the time has come for the humanitarian community to work collectively towards an inclusive system-wide coordination.

22. In the past, the Council has on occasions done so by convening ad hoc emergency sessions to enhance UN system wide coordination and to give policy guidance on a critical response. Humanitarian emergencies as well as development crises warrant that the Council should be able to respond swiftly to events as and when they occur. Its effective exercise would require, however, significant adjustments in the Council's methods of work so that it can monitor constantly and respond rapidly to situations.

23. In order to make ECOSOC more responsive to emerging and emergency situations, the Council should be able to convene as and when required. Preparation for such a response could be devised along the following lines:

- (a) ECOSOC emergency response should be on merit and case by case basis and triggered upon the request made by a Member State or on the recommendation of the President/Bureau;
- (b) Collect information and document the nature of the crisis by engaging experts and institutions and assess the situation.
- (c) Prepare recommendations for actions and specific interventions required to address the situation.

- (d) The Council could consider establishing an emergency caucus or an extended bureau to undertake studies and develop country or region specific recommendations for consideration by its Members;
- (e) ECOSOC should address the coordination and broad policy implications of a situation, threat or crisis;
- (f) ECOSOC may be supported by a UN system based Crisis Support Team/Secretariat.

24. Within the overall focus of sustainable development, the Council's response to emergencies and threats to development should specifically contribute to the following **objectives**:

- (a) Well coordinated response and follow-up from the UN to complex emergencies and natural disasters (e.g. preparedness to predict crises, prevent them, mitigate their impact and respond);
- (b) Comprehensive assessments of threats to development, such as famines, epidemics and major natural disaster or vulnerabilities;
- (c) Monitor threats to the realization of development challenges and emerging trends in economic and financial areas that could have an impact on development prospects and facilitate coordinated response to such threats;
- (d) Make recommendations on long term preventive solutions for action by relevant institutions.

Expected Outcome

25. The outcome could be President's statement/summary containing recommended actions for relevant UN bodies/instruments and countries concerned. It could also issue a press statement for raising awareness and advocacy.

IV. Work with Peace Building Commission-Countries emerging from Conflict

26. Within the UN system, the Economic and Social Council, as a central intergovernmental body for coordination, has been given Charter-mandated functions that can help in promoting more integrated approach to peace and development. The Economic and Social Council has made successful efforts to fulfil this need by establishing country-specific ad hoc advisory groups. The Economic and Social Council should institutionalize its work in post-conflict management by working with the proposed Peacebuilding Commission. It should also reinforce its links with the Security Council in order to promote structural prevention.

27. In both cases, the challenge is to develop the capacity of ECOSOC for reviewing trends and threats to development. The ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea Bissau, Burundi, and Haiti provide an example of the type of action the Council can build upon. A key lesson from the work of these Groups is that the Council is well placed, because of the breadth of its mandate and the inclusiveness of its methods of work, to spur action by the UN, international financial institutions, donors, regional organizations and other partners to help mobilize the needed attention and resources during more long term post conflict reconstruction.

28. ECOSOC can make significant contribution to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission by building on its successful experience of the Groups. It needs to develop channels and mechanisms to institutionalize its links with the Commission.

29. ECOSOC should build on its relationship with the BWIs and regional bodies and work with them much more collaboratively in order to bring post-conflict countries back into the global economy.

30. The issue of **playing a major role in the overall coordination of funds, programmes and agencies, ensuring coherence among them and avoiding duplication of mandates and activities** can be covered by DCF as well as by making changes in the way Coordination segment is designed.

V. Methods of Work

31. The Summit has stressed that the current methods of work of the Council should be adapted so that it can effectively perform its new functions. This would entail re-thinking the way current segments are organized and other related processes. For instance, high-level segment will have to serve three purposes, namely, undertake ministerial reviews, convene a Development Cooperation Forum every other year and have thematic discussions on topical issues. How to link this review with the functional commissions and General Assembly review of the implementation of the outcomes of conferences? Similarly, how to link the operational activities segment with the work of the Development Cooperation Forum? How should the coordination segment be re-designed so that the Council could play a more effective role in the overall coordination? These are some of the issues that need to be addressed while working out the modalities for performing the functions entrusted by the Summit. However, the modalities should be worked out with the clear understanding that these functions are very closely related and have a direct impact on the various dimensions of the implementation of the development agenda.

32. During the year of the Development Cooperation Forum, the Council may devote one day to the review of implementation and the remaining two days to the Forum. In the subsequent year, one day of the review of implementation may be followed by a two-day policy discussion on a theme to be decided by the Council. Such an arrangement would enable the Council to engage high-level participants on a whole range of issues.

VI. Role of the Secretariat/UN System

33. To support the new functions of ECOSOC, the Secretariat will need to undertake a whole range of activities, including (a) develop a framework for review with possible tools to assess and track progress or lack thereof in the implementation; (b) coordinate the preparation of reports for the review and assessment and Development Cooperation Forum; (c) monitor trends and identify emerging threats to the achievement of the development goals; (d) assist member states in the preparation of their reports to the Council and in organizing expert group meetings and (e) establish substantive networks with relevant institutions and organizations.
