

EU PAPER ON ECOSOC REFORM: 24 OCTOBER

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The EU wants the GA to move as quickly as possible to implement paragraphs 155-156 of the Summit Outcome Document for a more effective ECOSOC. In taking this forward we need to bear in mind: ECOSOC's relationship to the GA and its Committees; to ECOSOC subsidiary bodies (eg the Regional and Functional Commissions); and to other UN bodies (eg UN Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies, UNDG, OCHA) and other institutions (eg BWIs). Our work should be guided by the following points:

- i) ECOSOC has a system-wide co-ordination role for UN work on economic, social, environmental, humanitarian and related issues, eg to ensure that there are no overlaps or gaps in the system; to monitor the consistency of UN policies in these areas in terms of harmonisation and co-ordination; and to ensure co-ordination and alignment in the work of its subsidiary bodies;***
- ii) ECOSOC reform should focus on its added value for overall UN coordination in these areas, and should avoid duplication with other bodies;***
- iii) To ensure political visibility, ECOSOC's substantive session should be at the centre of its activity; and could be improved to ensure high-level participation;***
- iv) The EU is strongly attached to the current balance between New York and Geneva;***
- v) ECOSOC should have flexibility also to arrange additional ad hoc meetings to respond to real world developments and emerging issues in its areas of responsibility;***
- vi) Ad hoc activity, just as for regular ECOSOC business, should be arranged without duplication or proliferation of meetings or activity; and, as for all ECOSOC reform, should be within the existing allocation of resources;***
- vii) ECOSOC should make use of its comparative advantage to convene debate amongst key stakeholders, including private sector, civil society/NGOs;***
- viii) Negotiated outcomes are not always necessary for all meetings; often a Presidential Summary is appropriate;***
- ix) In the light of wider progress on Secretariat reform, we should strengthen the effectiveness of the support for, and preparation of, ECOSOC meetings.***

In line with these points, the EU has the following views on the Summit Outcome:

B. ECOSOC REFORM PROPOSALS IN THE OUTCOME DOCUMENT

155 a) Promote global dialogue/partnership on policies/emerging trends in economic, social, environmental and humanitarian fields.

- Promoting global dialogue and partnerships on policies and emerging trends in the economic, social, environmental, humanitarian and related fields is a core ECOSOC activity. Policy dialogue on themes like health, employment, energy, environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including relevant stakeholders from the UN family, other institutions, civil society and private sector, is a core task.
- We should ensure balance between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development – not focus only on the economic/development issues.
- Policy Dialogue at the political level should replace the High Level Segment of the annual substantive session of ECOSOC in alternate years.

b) Biennial Development Cooperation Forum to review trends in development cooperation.

- The EU welcomes the proposal for a biennial High Level Development Cooperation Forum (DCF).
- The DCF should address multilateral (including UN/BWI), bilateral (between donors and programme countries) and South-South co-operation. It could focus on how different actors work together in support of country led development strategies.
- the DCF should take place at Ministerial level in early July, replacing the High Level Segment of the Substantive Session, in alternate years to the Policy Dialogue.
- To rationalise the number of ministerial meetings, the DCF should not take place in the same year as the GA High Level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

c) Ensure follow-up to the outcomes of the major UN Conferences and Summits ... hold annual ministerial level reviews to assess progress.

- The annual ministerial review of progress towards the outcomes of the major UN Conferences and Summits, including the MDGs, should take place in July following the DCF or Policy Dialogue. This timing would enable Ministerial attendance.
- The review should draw on the work of the functional and regional commissions and other international institutions, including the BWIs. There is no need for a “new matrix” – the review can be based on the large number of existing mechanisms and reports, including from OECD/DAC and the UN Funds and Programmes.
- While being comprehensive, the review should not address all conference outcomes each year. The annual focus could be a particular region (rather than country-by-country), and/or a subset of the MDGs or other goals, or a specific conference.
- All stake-holders, including civil society, should be fully associated with these reviews

d) ECOSOC to support and complement efforts on humanitarian emergencies/natural disasters.

- Ad hoc ECOSOC meetings - agreed by the ECOSOC Bureau - on humanitarian emergencies/natural disasters can perform an important function, including in mobilising international attention to humanitarian crises.
- These events should not cut across OCHA's operational coordination of the humanitarian response to particular disasters/emergencies. Nor should they duplicate work in the GA, its Committees or ECOSOC subsidiary bodies.
- ECOSOC debate should focus on generic issues; system coherence; and lessons learned. This could be achieved by focus on a particular theme: such as the meetings during the 2005 humanitarian segment on lessons from the Tsunami.
- In this context the EU welcomes the meetings on Africa Food Crisis and Avian Flu.

e) ECOSOC to play a major role in overall coordination of funds, programmes and agencies.

- ECOSOC plays an important role as a forum for promoting guidance and coordination to UN Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies, in order to promote system-wide coherence in policy terms and for operational activities.
- The ECOSOC operational activities segment should continue to oversee the implementation of GA decisions on the reform of the UN development system.
- We should not duplicate the role of governing bodies and co-ordination mechanisms of the Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies, eg over country-level activity.
- The Heads of UN Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies should have the right to bring issues of co-ordination and coherence to ECOSOC's attention.
- ECOSOC should ensure that themes such as sustainable development, human rights and gender are taken into account in decision-making across the UN.

156. Adaptation of agenda, organisation and programme of work.

- The EU is ready to work on adapting ECOSOC's organisation of work, agenda and methods of work to perform these tasks. The EU believes the substantive session could be prepared more effectively, for example through the following measures: a comprehensively annotated agenda, available earlier; a streamlined report format; more coherent ordering of formal debates and informal negotiations, so delegations can participate in both; fewer but meaningful resolutions; a rationalised agenda for the General Segment, with topics clustered where possible and a focus on select reports according to need within each cluster; and oral presentation of reports
- The EU recalls its strong attachment to the current balance between Geneva and New York
- ECOSOC should have the flexibility to arrange additional ad hoc meetings.
- This should be done within the existing allocation of conference services and costs.

C. OTHER IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS

- a) ECOSOC's role in Peacebuilding.** The EU agrees that ECOSOC has a role to play in post-conflict situations. The EU supports a strong linkage between ECOSOC and the Peace-building Commission as proposed by the Secretary-General in April. ECOSOC should highlight the medium and long-term economic, social and environmental dimensions of post-conflict situations. These issues should be handled for the time being in the framework of post-Summit GA negotiations, not separately by ECOSOC.
- b) Human Rights.** Notwithstanding the possible establishment of a Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, ECOSOC can continue to play an important role in, for example, the mainstreaming of human rights in the UN.