

STATEMENT

**by the Head of the Delegation of Ukraine, H.E. Mr. Valeriy Kuchynsky,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations,
at the high-level segment of the 2002 ECOSOC substantive session on the theme
“The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and
education, to the process of development ”**

New York, 3 July 2002

Mr. President,

At the outset I would like to thank you and other members of the Bureau for your tireless efforts in preparation for the current session of the Council, particularly in organizing a series of round table discussions on the theme of the session's high-level segment.

We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for the report E/2002/46, which gives us a clear picture of the critical importance of human resources development in the global development process, and outlines the role, which ECOSOC should play to assist countries in achieving the development goals and coping with the challenges of globalization. We fully endorse the recommendations contained in the report.

The High-Level Policy Dialogue, Roundtables on Human Resources Development held in the framework of this session as well as the statements by previous distinguished speakers once again proved that “health and education are the twin pillars on which we must build the well-being of individuals, and thus a more healthy, equitable and peaceful tomorrow”.

On Monday, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe Ms. Brigita Schmognerova drew attention to the significant development potential of the countries with economy in transition. In terms of macroeconomic growth, Ukraine is among the leading countries in the region: last year we had GDP growth of 9,1 percent, 14,2 percent industrial growth and 9,9 percent agricultural growth. In his recent address to the Ukrainian Parliament “European Choice”, President Leonid Kuchma outlined the long-term strategy of economic and social development of our state for the next decade, which is aimed at the formation of a democratic state based on the rule of law, with highly developed economy. It is important for the attainment of our main geopolitical goal – to become member of the European Union.

The Government of Ukraine fully recognizes the importance of domestic spending on human resources development, particularly in the spheres of health and education.

Education remains the key to social and economic development, to peace and stability, and to democracy. Nowadays, when human resources development strategies must adapt to the changing needs in the context of rapid globalization, the role of higher education as the most important link between national potential and the modern economic system, is growing.

Ukraine is applying rigorous efforts for reinforcing progress in its education sector to keep it up to the increased role of personality, humanization and democratization of society.

There is no need to discuss whether improved health is central to the development process or not. Everybody knows what a devastating impact such diseases as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis have on development processes in a great number of countries, particularly in Africa. In this context it is imperative to ensure health coverage for the poor, reduce mortality rates, control the spread of communicable diseases and improve maternal and child health care.

In my country public health issues are considered to be among the top priorities of our national development strategy. The most remarkable example is the comprehensive State programme "Health for the Nation". It has defined a range of activities aimed at strengthening the health protection of population, especially of children and those suffering from the long-lasting consequences of the 1986 catastrophe at the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant.

Speaking about investments in public health services at the country level, it is important to mention that Ukraine, despite its economic growth trends, is still among the countries with under-financed system of public health.

The main tasks before the Government today are to ensure the sustainability of economic growth and to translate it into the benefits for all people. Among them - strengthening of the social function of the state budget, increasing the social expenditures for human development, especially for education and health.

For this purpose we need an enabling force of external financial investments, whose role in achieving success in human resources development is indispensable. Another important precondition for the irreversibility of the achieved positive trends, in our view, is the access to the European and world markets, which Ukraine considers as integral part of its European integration strategy.

I would also like to mention the importance of such supportive instrument for the development process as nondiscriminatory international trade system. With the protectionist barriers lifted it could considerably expedite the processes of economic and human development. We believe that Ukraine's accession to the World Trade Organization will give yet another impetus towards strengthening national health and educational networks.

Today, because the state budget is very limited, we have to make the most effective use of available funds to advance to the solution of the most acute problems.

The most alarming one is the problem of HIV/AIDS. Over the past two decades, AIDS has drastically spread all over the world. Horrible epidemic that has already taken numerous human lives began to strike European continent. Unfortunately, Ukraine is among those countries, which have been most acutely affected by the disease.

The first HIV-infected Ukrainian citizen was registered in June 1987, but to date almost 46 thousand HIV-infected individuals have been officially registered in my country. According to UNAIDS and WHO experts' estimates, the real scope of the epidemic is much higher and its spread in Ukraine has reached an alarming speed.

Pursuant to the Decree of the President of Ukraine, the year 2002 was declared the Year of Fighting AIDS in Ukraine. Within its framework the national efforts to combat the epidemic have become substantively advanced, focusing on two major priorities: HIV-infection prevention, including the use of "education vaccine" and support for HIV-infected people.

Combating the disease needs significant resources. And we are sincerely grateful for the international assistance, particularly from the UNAIDS, the World Bank and Global Fund to fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis that supports the national strategies against the epidemic. I do hope that after the recent visit of the UN Secretary-General to my country the activities to combat AIDS in Ukraine will be further intensified and expanded.

Mr. President,

The necessity of developed partnership and well-coordinated efforts of the entire world community aimed at creating enabling environment for the development of human resources is obvious and undeniable.

Our delegation is convinced that given the need for multisectoral approach to the issue, the role of the UN in coordination of the international cooperation in this sphere should be further strengthened.

In our view, the ECOSOC, as the main UN coordinating body in the economic and social fields, should maintain the focus on human resources development.

Finally, I would like to express our strong belief that the current Council's session will give a renewed impulse to national and international efforts aimed at improving health and education. We are equally convinced that it will accelerate progress towards achieving the Development Millennium Goals.

Thank you.