
**HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL 2002**

**Statement by
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on behalf of the European Union**

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Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the associated countries Cyprus and Turkey, as well as the EFTA country of the European Economic Area, Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

2. The European Union welcomes this opportunity to discuss “The Contribution of Human Resources Development, including in the areas of Health and Education, to the process of Development” at this High Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council. We congratulate the Secretary-General with his report on the subject as well as his report on “United Nations System Support to Capacity Building” prepared for the discussion of “Operational Activities”. Both have provided important inputs to our deliberations.

3. Two years ago the World leaders assembled at the Millennium Summit adopted the Millennium Declaration. Seen together with the outcomes of the International Conferences of the past decade, the commitment to poverty eradication as the overarching goal of our efforts in promoting sustainable development is incontestable. These milestones in the international development efforts clearly reflect that Human Resources Development, not least in the Health and Education sectors and especially in the least developed countries, is pivotal to the development process.

4. The Internationally agreed development goals and the outcomes of the international conferences, especially the Millennium Development Goals, now constitute the foundation for the establishment of the national Poverty Reduction Strategies and subsequently the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, guiding the United Nations efforts at country level. The growing trend towards country led development frameworks and mechanisms, including CCA/UNDAF, PRSPs and SWAps, places more emphasis than ever before on national capacity for policy and programme formulation and implementation. Several reforms, including the decentralisation of services and decision-making requires intensified capacity building at all levels.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Turning to our main focus of today’s deliberations, we see Human Resources Development as an extremely important tool to providing developing countries the necessary capacity to reaching these ambitious Goals.

6. The Secretary General in his report to this High Level Segment rightly stresses that Human Resources Development is contributing to poverty eradication and long term economic growth through improved health, education and capacity building. National ownership is key in this endeavour, through allocation of public resources, design of public policies and implementation of investment and expenditure projects. We must all work to secure that these national leadership efforts are pursued in close coordination and collaboration with all partners in Development. Within this framework the Human Resources Development must take the form of a holistic and multifaceted socio-economic approach, through empowerment and participation, effectively contributing to capacity building at national level. The EU underscores the need to develop national

and sectoral policies and plans, in which reproductive health care and services, population and gender issues are integrated. It also underscores the need to strengthen the health sector, which is particularly important for the fight against HIV/AIDS.

7. Improved health remains one of the key elements in the overall development process. As clearly suggested in the report of the WHO Commission on Macroeconomics and Health a substantial increase in investments in health for poor people will not only save millions of lives but also result in improved economic performance. The developing countries continue to suffer a huge burden of diseases, many of which are preventable or manageable using available interventions. Poor people are also among the first to suffer the negative health consequences of pollution and environmental degradation. In order to develop to the fullest possible the human resources, more efforts must be undertaken to improve national health systems in developing countries, making these systems able to provide increased and equal access to essential health services and thus healthy lives for all, particularly in the area of reproductive health.

8. The Development Ministers of the European Union in May of this year reconfirmed their strong conviction of the importance of improving reproductive health for development. They underlined that reproductive sexual and health care, services and education are also crucial elements in the fight against poverty and hence essential in activities undertaken to reach the goals and targets set by international conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals. Reproductive health services furthermore provide a critical foundation for efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS, to lower maternal and child mortality as well as to promoting gender equity and the basic rights of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so. The Ministers stated their determination to avoid any weakening of the consensus reached at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 and its five year review in 1999, and they emphasised the need for continued and strengthened support to the Cairo agenda and UNFPA, being the lead agency for its implementation. We encourage all countries to follow up on the commitments made by giving high priority to reproductive health and to increase support for reproductive health care and services as well as for implementing agencies, primarily UNFPA.

9. In a number of developing countries, especially in the least developed countries and in Africa, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has had a devastating impact, which needs to be addressed through increased resources. Financing for interventions aiming at preventing the further spread of the disease and for care and treatment of the disease is a priority. The negative impact of the pandemic on human resources development in general and on skilled workers in health and education sectors in particular is devastating. The EU Action Plan on Aid for Poverty Diseases in Developing Countries aims at providing a comprehensive package of interventions for the three major communicable diseases: HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. We are also committed to helping the Global Fund to Fight Aids, TB and Malaria establish itself as an effective mechanism for delivery of essential support to those most in need. The European Union also notes with concern the increased burden that non-communicable diseases pose to the global health situation. The EU recognizes that the toll of mental health problems is considerable and should be addressed accordingly.

10. Education is central to the development process. We fully agree with the Secretary-General that the education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and for creating economic growth and sustainable development. Education is an instrument of empowerment. It empowers people to direct their own lives, facilitate participation in community life and in the wider democratic processes in society. Education is also a central element in the effort to influence and change behavioural and cultural traditions of importance to the development process. This we have seen in the fight against HIV/AIDS, in relation to women's role in society, in the sustainable management of the natural resource base, as well as in promoting respect for human rights and democracy.

11. The EU remains strongly committed to the Millennium Development Goal related to education and to the Dakar Framework for Action and to the goals contained therein. We are determined to assist developing nations in achieving these goals. The risk of not reaching these goals is realistic and a concerted effort is needed to reverse this trend. We, therefore, welcome recent EFA initiatives by for instance the World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF. Education of children and young people should be seen as the investment that contributes most to long-term and sustainable growth in terms of economic performance, democratic institutions and good governance. We recognise not only the current imbalance with respect to girls' education, but also the critical influence educated women have on family health, family size, as well as the impact educated mothers have on girls' enrolment and attendance in schools.

12. The issues of education and health are closely interrelated. Good health improves the ability to learn and the level of education is significant for the ability to make the right choices concerning health. The "Education Vaccine" against HIV/AIDS is a noteworthy example of this interrelation. It shows how an educational strategy can be used to hamper the spread of HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS pandemic must have an impact on educational structures and the contents of education. In order to meet the needs of children carrying the virus and suffering from the disease as well as the needs of the increasing number of AIDS-orphans, educational structures and contents, including the curricula, must be changed. Schools cannot ignore this situation. Both health and education affect a range of other issues important for the development process such as improved and more equitable growth and improved environmental protection.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Human Resources Development, Technical Co-operation and Capacity Building are terms frequently used and misused over the past thirty years. A massive transfer of knowledge has certainly taken place, and the individual educational results have been remarkable. However, this process seems seldom to have ignited a positive chain reaction throughout the societies. The capacity of local institutions and of countries as a whole has still not appeared adequate to meet the challenges of development. In other words, you have seen micro-improvements but little macro-impact.

14. It is necessary to understand that Capacity Development is a broader concept than just Human Resource Development. It refers not merely to the acquisition of skills but also to the capability to use them. National capacity is not just the sum of total individual capacities, it also involves creating incentives for people to operate successfully at the societal level.

15. The United Nations Agencies will, like all development actors, have to observe very closely the need to cooperate on the basis of national ownership to the process to improve upon the capacity development. Improving the local capacity to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals is a universal responsibility. But in this process extreme care should be exercised. The developing countries today all possess capacities that will have to form the basis for the national development. These capacities should never just be replaced by foreign capacities, rather be transformed or adapted to the needs of the modern globalised world. In short: Good development policies have to be home grown.

Mr. Chairman,

16. Stating the shortcomings of our collective efforts over the years does not automatically present an appropriate answer to the question of what specific alternatives exist. It is important to promote the integration of social and economic policies while ensuring sustainable development, promoting the eradication of poverty, economic growth, full employment and ensuring access for all to basic social services. However, I should also like to pledge the full support of the European Union to the search for new and innovative solutions to reducing poverty, increasing productivity and furthering national development. To this end, Human Resources Development and national Capacity Building are fundamental prerequisites. But as clearly stated in The Secretary General's report, Human Resources Development Strategies must adapt to meet the changing needs in the context of globalisation in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. A multi sector approach is needed to maximize the impact of scarce resources.

17. Globalisation presents new challenges and new opportunities, which underline the need for capacity building. New technology makes knowledge easily available throughout the world, and the traditional reliance on foreign experts in large numbers may radically change. This has an unprecedented impact on the relationship between donors and recipients with the latter in a much better position to take responsibility for the capacity building with the necessary financial support from the donors. We welcome the upcoming World Summit on Information Society, where, among other issues, the application of new technologies in the fields of health and education will be discussed with the collaboration of UNESCO and WHO.

18. The UN and other international organisations play an important part in this process. However, seen in the context of overall global resources available for development, the individual agencies have limited financial capacities. Consequently, the reform process with respect to the operational activities of the UN must be pursued with a view to harmonize the activities at country level. The EU would like to underline its strong support for any enhanced efforts on behalf of the funds and programmes to engage in joint programming. This would constitute a significant contribution to an instrument such as sector wide approaches. All development partners should give priority to their participation in sector wide approaches. Depending on the specific country and sector in case the feasibility of various options to reach a tailor made solution, included basket funding, should be evaluated.

19. However, we must realize that no one today possesses a universally agreed manual to capacity building. The ultimate aim to make all countries capable of implementing for themselves the inter-

nationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, we all agree to. But the final design of the institutional innovations to support capacity development, will continue to be discussed. Hopefully, the deliberations during this session of the Economic and Social Council will contribute to stimulating this process.

Mr. Chairman,

20. This session of the Economic and Social Council takes place in the mid-stream of a series of International conferences rooted in the Millennium Summit. We must realize that our deliberations fit into a pattern of extremely important Conferences from the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, through the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, and leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg beginning at the end of August.

21. We are convinced that international trade is an authentic engine for development and poverty eradication in many developing countries. The European Union is firmly committed to taking a leading role in the negotiations outlined by the Doha Development Agenda, with special emphasis on providing further market access for Developing Countries. The European Union is in fact the main export market for developing countries and offers generous trade preferences. Furthermore, the EU has marked an appropriate path with the “Everything but Arms ” initiative, which provides for tariff- and quota-free access to the European market for all goods (except arms and ammunition) from the Least Developed Countries.

22. The European Union will increase assistance to strengthen long-term trade capacity, productive capacity and measures to alleviate supply side constraints in developing countries. As reflected in the Doha declaration, the EU will facilitate technical assistance to improve the negotiating capacity of developing countries with respect to trade, including this capacity in relation to the TRIPs Agreement.

23. The European Union is also the world’s biggest donor of development aid, contributing with approximately half of all global ODA. As the leading world donor, we confirm our commitment to the new partnership for resources mobilization forged in Monterrey in order to reach the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development as specified in the draft Johannesburg plan of action. In accordance with our repeated commitment to achieving the internationally agreed goal of channelling 0.7% of our Gross Domestic Product to Official Development Assistance, the Member States of the EU have committed themselves to a substantive overall increase in ODA. The EU is also committed to measures to enhance the effectiveness of its aid, including implementation of the DAC recommendation on untying aid to LDCs and harmonization of aid procedures in line with DAC best practices by 2004.

24. But I also want to recall that our political will to move forward on the resource mobilization agenda is closely interlinked with the implementation by all development partners of their commitments in the Consensus. This includes the commitments to taking the national responsibility for economic and social development. And it includes the commitments to good governance, democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights. We agree with the Secretary General, when he

in the report stresses that both domestic spending and international support for the social goals must be increased in order to provide adequate and sustained resources for effective programmes that will strengthen the necessary delivery systems for health and education.

25. The next step we will have to take in Johannesburg. The EU sees the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg as part of a process building on previous results, including the Doha Development Agenda and the Monterrey Consensus. The European Union is determined to exercise leadership at the Summit. We remain committed to driving forward the agenda of sustainable development to the benefit of all. We shall do our utmost to ensure that sustainable development be addressed in a comprehensive manner, including all of its three dimensions: economical, social and environmental. In other words: All development should be sustainable development. We shall strive to obtain clear commitments between governments in rich and poor countries, as well as between governments and civil society and the private sector. Domestic commitments to good governance and promotion of public and private partnerships are also central elements. We urge all parties to consider what they can contribute towards reaching these goals. The aim is to achieve a Global Deal for sustainable development for the 21st Century. A Global Deal will be crucial to making globalisation a positive force for all, and for ensuring broad economic and political stability.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.