

## Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs to the 12th Session of the Committee for Development Policy

*22 March 2010, New York*

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the 12th session of the Committee for Development Policy.

I hear that you have 11 new members. I welcome all 11 of you. I am confident that, along with the 13 sitting members, you will continue the excellent work of your predecessors.

At last year's session the world was in the midst of the most serious economic challenge since the Great Depression. Today we see some signs of recovery: a number of economies showed positive growth in the last quarter of 2009.

The overall recovery, however, is uneven, and it is fragile. Unemployment is still rising. Increases in government indebtedness may further threaten financial stability. Rain shortfalls in Africa will create a major threat to food security this year.

The expert advice of the CDP is urgently needed as we try to emerge from the global recession. The onset and continuation of the economic downturn has shattered much conventional wisdom on growth, markets, and on how to reduce and eliminate extreme poverty.

Your guidance in strengthening the role and relevance of ECOSOC in advancing sustainable development is needed now more than ever. We also have heard direct requests from Member States for advice on recovery and sustainable development. We need your input on this: how can the UN best support Member States in dealing with the financial crisis and in strengthening their national development strategies.

Allow me to make a few concrete suggestions in this regard, in relation to the issues on your agenda:

During this year's Annual Ministerial Review, the Council will focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Empowering women is not just a Millennium Development Goal itself, but an essential ingredient in reaching all other goals. In many developing countries, the economic downturn has disproportionately affected the livelihoods of women.

Your advice to ECOSOC on how to redress this situation is needed. What concrete steps are needed to increase gender equality and how can the international community support them? What must be done differently with the backdrops of the economic crisis and the food security crisis?

We pose these questions with the hope that your expertise will guide us now, and at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on MDGs in September.

This MDG Summit is an opportunity to keep our promise to billions, yes, billions of poor and vulnerable people who have, at least to date, been left behind.

The Summit must reinvigorate the Millennium Development Goals compact and instil a sense of moral solidarity. If we fall short, the dangers of our world will grow more perilous.

Just as developing countries strive to do their part, so must the international community, by strengthening Goal number 8 - the global partnership for development.

To achieve the partnership we need more resources. Official development assistance to Africa is essentially unchanged since 2005. We need no new commitments here; we need only make good on already-existing ones.

We also need technology. We have seen how cell phones and internet access are revolutionizing microfinance and entrepreneurships.

And we need a supportive international trade regime that works for people, not against them.

Throughout your deliberations, please frame your ideas and proposals with the needs of Goal 8 in mind.

Your work on financing for climate change is also crucial.

As you may know, the Secretary-General recently selected the members for the new High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing. It will work to mobilize the financing promised during the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, last December.

While the Advisory Group looks into raising funds, the CDP can provide insight into how they should be used and managed effectively.

The present structure for climate change financing is inadequate: it is too fragmented and there is too much overlap. In this regard, the Development Cooperation Forum needs innovative ideas on how to untangle the “spaghetti-bowl” of bilateral and multilateral funding channels.

Finally, the global economic crisis has caused new setbacks for many least developed countries. I would like to commend the Committee’s excellent work in assessing the needs of these countries, and I ask that you continue focusing on them.

In particular, your discussions on the future of international support measures have been timely. These measures are supposed to help LDCs overcome their impediments to development. These measures are apparently lacking – as evidenced by so many countries still retaining the LDC status. New approaches may be needed.

I look forward with great interest to your proposals. They will be especially important for ECOSOC and for the Fourth UN Conference on the LDCs in 2011.

Most countries recently identified for graduation from the LDC category are small island developing states (SIDS). They are, however, still highly vulnerable in economic terms and climate change threatens their very existence. I am glad to see that ECOSOC requested the Committee to submit its independent views on small island developing states.

Excellencies,

This is no small agenda that lies ahead of you. I trust that you, with the support of the CDP Secretariat, will provide the Council with solid insight, innovative ideas and practical proposals. I wish you much success in your deliberations

Thank you very much for your attention.

\*\*\*\*\*

Print