

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF ECOSOC
H. E. AMBASSADOR SYLVIE LUCAS**

**AT THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE
COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY
(9 MARCH 2009)**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Under-Secretary General,
Distinguished Members of the Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to be invited to the opening session of the Committee for Development Policy.

As the President of the Economic and Social Council and in my national capacity, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to all of you present today for lending your time, energy and expertise to the Committee.

I would like to acknowledge the CDP Chairperson, Mr. Ricardo Ffrench-Davis for his able leadership, and its Secretariat for its professional support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In recent years, the international community has witnessed significant steps in the efforts to improve the plight of the poor of this world. Thanks to these efforts, considerable progress has been made. However, the current global financial and economic crisis puts at risk many development gains made so

far. It also forces us to enlarge even further the circle of those to focus on, to be of assistance. This is of great concern; the more so, since this crisis comes on top of the food and fuel crises that hit many in the developing world last year.

The global crisis will put multilateralism to a major test. We need concerted solutions to overcome this crisis and avoid retreats into beggar-thy-neighbour policies of protectionism and inward-looking responses. It will also be a test of the strength of ECOSOC. Your expertise and advice to find effective solutions and new approaches to deal with current challenges is of great importance in this respect.

The Committee's ongoing work on the implications of the current financial turmoil for developing countries can notably make a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate and this year's ECOSOC Spring meeting with the BWI's, WTO and UNCTAD.

The current global crisis will have implications not only on the economy of countries but also for the welfare of their populations. It is particularly important to take into account its negative consequences for advancing global public health and to introduce offsetting mechanisms to safeguard the progress so hardly achieved. As you know, global public health is the focus of this year's annual ministerial review. This theme has a unique cross-sectoral nature, and I am particularly pleased with the Committee's focus on bringing to the Council's attention specific aspects of the global public health agenda which need to be strengthened so as to achieve better health outcomes for all.

I highly value your advice as an independent and multidisciplinary group of development experts and I intend to make sure that your recommendations will resound in the deliberations of the Council on the steps to be taken to meet the challenges in the area of global public health. I hope the Committee's analysis will put the related issues in the context of the broader UN development agenda and signal new issues for the future which ECOSOC should consider to advance the global partnership for development.

In this respect, I also welcome the Committee's continued analysis on the implications of climate change for sustainable development, particularly in view of the current concerns of the financial and economic crisis, which is impacting also on the larger emitters.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another important aspect of this week's meeting is the Committee's triennial review of the list of Least Developed Countries.

Despite some progress achieved in the implementation of the commitments agreed to under the Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs, extreme poverty continues to remain high in the LDCs. Since 1994 Cape Verde has been the only country that exited the list, while only two other countries - the Maldives and Samoa - are currently being considered for graduation.

These facts underline both the complexity of the challenges confronting the LDCs and the need to consider more effective ways to support these countries in their development quest. In this regard, I hope the Committee will be able to review the effectiveness of the special support measures currently made available by the international community to LDCs. The review could include specific suggestions on how to strengthen the existing support measures, not only by making them more responsive to LDCs' needs, but also by taking into account the urgency to address new emerging trends, in particular the challenges brought by climate change.

The Council attaches great importance to your recommendations in respect to graduation and welcomes the implementation of the additional guidelines endorsed in 2007. The process is now clearer, more inclusive and transparent. This is of course an issue of great sensitivity to Member States and of special concern to those earmarked for graduation in view of their perceived continued vulnerabilities and uncertainties about life after graduation. In this regard, the Committee has a great responsibility on its shoulders, a responsibility that I am sure it will continue to carry with great professionalism and integrity, as it has done in the past.

Let me stress in this context the continued need for the Committee to engage in public diplomacy with the Member states, regularly updating them on the work of the Committee, so as to enable Member states to take well-informed decisions on the report put forward every year to ECOSOC by the Committee.

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Under-Secretary General,
Distinguished Members of the Committee,

ECOSOC has a very busy year ahead of it. I have all the confidence that the Committee and the Council will work together to the common objectives of the Council. Let us work for the improvement of the lives of millions of people that are in dire need.

I look forward to the outcome of your discussions and to your inputs for advising ECOSOC on the implementation of the United Nations development agenda. May we get together and strive to serve and strengthen the Organization of which we're so proud to be a part of.

Thank you.