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**Statement by
MR. THOMAS STELZER
ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR POLICY COORDINATION
AND INTER-AGENCY AFFAIRS TO THE COORDINATION SEGMENT OF THE
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**Introduction of the report of the Secretary-General
on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up
to the major UN conferences and summits**

I have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits (E/2008/77).

From the conferences of the 1990s to the Millennium Summit, a global consensus was reached on policies and actions to advance poverty eradication and sustainable development. Development issues were brought to the forefront of the multilateral debate, giving renewed impetus and direction to the work of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.

Each conference focused on a different dimension of development. Yet, the issues they dealt with are inevitably interlinked. And the different goals and targets agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits can be achieved only if they are pursued in an integrated manner, as part of a comprehensive UN development agenda. The global conference follow-up mechanisms thus have framed their work around the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and adopted a comprehensive approach to addressing the follow-up to their individual conferences.

Throughout this process of integrated and coordinated follow-up, the Economic and Social Council has played a central role. At the 2005 World Summit, Member States renewed their commitments made in the outcomes of UN conferences and summits and resolved to step up efforts to implement the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. To this end, they devised a stronger ECOSOC system with the Council and its subsidiary bodies operating as a unified system around the single framework of the development agenda to review and drive its implementation. In particular, with the Annual Ministerial Review, the World Summit gave ECOSOC a new powerful tool for translating the integrated and coordinated approach into substantive reviews of implementation.

The report of the Secretary-General, which is before you, serves two purposes. First, it highlights the progress made on the conference follow-up as it relates to the 2008 AMR theme, *Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development*, as well as the main policy issues discussed by the functional commissions this year. Second, the report addresses the institutional aspects of the follow-up processes and how to promote policy coherence and strengthen the link between the normative and operational work of the UN system.

Although the adoption of the theme for 2008 AMR took place after most commissions had established multi-year work programmes, many commissions have contributed to the discussion in different ways through their deliberations on specific aspects of sustainable development, such as urbanization, agriculture and rural development, and the information requirements – in terms of environmental statistics and indicators – to support a well-informed policy debate on climate change.

On procedural aspects, the report detail of the improvements that have facilitated the substantive work of the ECOSOC machinery. Collaboration among commissions, through joint bureau meetings and interactive expert panels, has contributed to the efforts of enhanced policy coherence on cross-cutting issues. The adoption of multi-year programmes by commissions and now by the Council has further facilitated the engagement of actors.

Since its first session last year, the Annual Ministerial Review has raised the integrated conference follow-up process to the next level. The AMR is meant to strengthen accountability of commitments, providing a forum for review and renewal of commitments and mobilizing and maintaining the momentum to achieve the goals, including the MDGs. It has strengthened substantive integration and the ECOSOC system's ability to work in a more coordinated fashion.

The global review aspect of the AMR provides a high-level annual overview, while the country presentations and country-led meetings give a national and regional perspective. Moreover, the AMR has a substantive focus, on cross-sectoral themes common to the outcomes of major UN conferences. It therefore provides ECOSOC with a vehicle that is specific and, at the same time, sufficiently comprehensive for substantive review of the implementation of the conferences and their follow-up processes.

To have real impact on peoples' livelihoods, progress made in the UN system's conceptual and standard-setting work aimed at advancing implementation of the global development agenda must be translated into progress at the country-level. The National Voluntary Presentations provide an important new opportunity for countries to share and learn from each other's experiences in implementing their national development strategies. This has linked the discussions on policy options with specific country experiences, thereby bringing the United Nations' normative and operational work one step closer together.

With the launching of the AMR, the process of integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences has become more substantive and visible, while also strengthening the Council's engagement with its functional commissions and with the UN system funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

One of the key questions which you will need to address in this session is how to proceed with the report on integrated and coordinated follow-up of conferences.

Given that the integrated substantive review is now being pursued through the AMR process and that the procedural improvements of the follow-up processes have been completed for the time being, it is recommended that the Council consider deciding to triennialize this report. This would provide a reasonable time period before the next overall review of the integrated conference follow-up. Any structural and procedural changes for making the ECOSOC system more coherent and integrative may then be reviewed at regular intervals.

We hope that the report of the Secretary-General provides you with some food for thought as you consider how to further promote the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the major UN conferences and summits within the ECOSOC system.

The Secretariat stands fully ready to assist the Council in its deliberations.

Thank you.
