

**Chairpersons' Summary**  
**ECOSOC event to discuss transition from relief to development**  
**13 July 2010, New York**

The informal ECOSOC event on transition was held on 13 July 2010 in New York, co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Alexandru Cujba, Vice President of the ECOSOC Operational Activities segment, and H.E. Mr. Octavio Errázuriz, Vice President of the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs segment.

The panel discussion that took place focused on transition from relief to development, and lessons learned from the experience in Haiti. The panellists were: H.E. Ambassador Voltaire, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Envoy to the UN Secretary-General; Dr. Patricia Michaèle Amédée Gédéon, President of the Haitian Red Cross; Dr. Paul Farmer, UN Deputy Special Envoy for Haiti; and Mr. Nigel Fisher, DSRSG/RC/HC, for the United Nations in Haiti. The panel was moderated by Ms. Deborah Landey, Director of the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO).

The presentations stressed that the earthquake, which struck Haiti on 12 January 2010, was of such devastating proportions, that it made the response efforts unusually complex for both the Haitian authorities and the international community. The presentations explained the roles in recovery and reconstruction of the Government of Haiti, the Haitian Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies, the UN and the international community as a whole.

It was pointed out that while immediate and extensive humanitarian assistance has been provided, the affected population continues to have significant needs. Rubble removal remains a main concern and it is delaying the construction of shelters and repair of damaged buildings, a key priority together with sanitation. A large number of IDPs remain in camps, some of which are becoming increasingly difficult to manage, which also poses major challenges. Moreover, the devastation unleashed by the earthquake has further weakened an economy already shackled by lack of investment capital and skilled labour.

Looking beyond the emergency response to the medium- and long-term, it will be important to support the Haitian Government's efforts to create sustainable communities which would have access to social services, jobs and socio-economic rights. The presentations stressed the need to strengthen the Haitian public authorities so that they can lead and gradually take over the recovery and reconstruction efforts. Efforts to rebuild, while addressing at the same time chronic underlying problems, will require significant investments, including in training the next generation, and will require the transfer of capital into Haitian hands through job creation. Recovery in Haiti is much more than meeting immediate needs; what is required is a social, economic and political transformation in Haiti, so that governance is strengthened and chronic poverty alleviated.

In spite of the generous pledges, recovery aid has so far been flowing in slowly. Lessons from Haiti's post-disaster response include the following: i) it is important to maintain and develop information and communication mechanisms between public authorities, humanitarian actors and civil society, including through an effective cluster system; ii) the Government should take the lead and the civil society should accompany the Government in planning for transition from the beginning; and iii) disaster preparedness is crucial and should be integrated in government plans.

In the Q&A session that followed the presentations, representatives of Member States stressed the importance of government leadership in Haiti's recovery, in establishing policies and norms, in coordinating and setting standards for the work of tens of thousands of NGOs operating in the country. It was stressed that the international community should work with and for the Haitian Government and people. The importance of protection and human rights was also raised, and the need for disaster preparedness was emphasized. Other issues raised concerned the inclusiveness of the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment exercise, and the importance for the Government to ensure provision of comprehensive social services. The need for psycho-social support for the affected population was also stressed.