

Summary of the Coordination Segment of the
Substantive Session of ECOSOC 2005
5-7 July 2005

“Towards achieving internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration”

The deliberations on the theme of this year's coordination segment focussed on the implementation of the agreed development goals and the role of the UN System both at the international and at the country levels. They complemented the discussions at the high-level segment and contributed to bringing greater thematic coherence to the various segments of the ECOSOC session. Discussions at both segments contributed to the preparatory process for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be held in September this year. Delegations commended the Report of the Secretary General for the High-Level and coordination segment (E/2005/56). They also welcomed the report of the Chief Executive Board for Coordination entitled *“One United Nations: Catalyst for Progress and Change – How the Millennium Declaration is changing the way the UN system works”*.

In his opening remarks **H.E. Mr. Ali Hachani**, Vice President of ECOSOC, noted that this year's theme is particularly timely in view of the High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in September. Pointing out the close link between the theme of the high-level - and the coordination segment, he said that while the High-level segment had focused, *inter alia*, on the challenges facing developing countries and on the priority areas in which future efforts will need to focus, the coordination segment would focus on how the UN system organizations could realign their activities to support the achievement of the goals and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration, particularly the Millennium Development Goals goals. He said that the Secretary-General provided important insights on what the system is doing to respond to this challenge in his report for the segment (E/2005/59). Mr. Hachani also said that while there will be no negotiated outcome document for the segment, he would prepare a summary of the deliberations during this segment which will form an important part of the ECOSOC input to the high-level plenary meeting

Mr. Patrizio Civili, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs noted that major progress had been made in the elaboration of a common policy framework in support of implementation of the MDGs and the UN development agenda but that a truly integrated follow-up to the conferences had still to emerge. He also stressed that ECOSOC with its functional commissions would be particularly well positioned to overcome the sectoral approach which still prevails in UN organizations by forging work around the development agenda. He observed that proposals in the report of the Secretary General to establish a peer review mechanism and the Development Cooperation Forum could help to realign the UN system in support of implementation. He proposed that the report of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination be considered in a segment that has a thematic link to the report, rather than in the general segment, which is currently the case.

The work of the **UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination**, in ensuring a better coverage of the MDGs in the system was commended by several delegations. It was also recognised that the **United Nations Development Group (UNDG)** had proven useful in implementing the MDGs. In response to a question from the floor on the relationship between CEB and UNDG, Mr. Civili cited the work of the CEB and UNDG on the triple crisis of

HIV/AIDS, food and governance in Southern Africa and discussions on field operations, in particular the role of resident co-ordinators, as examples where CEB and UNDG had cooperated closely. The regional dimension in the implementation of the development agenda was also highlighted by several speakers.

During the debate, speakers identified implementation as the key challenge ahead. It was generally recognized that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals goes hand-in-hand with the implementation of the development goals agreed by the international community at the major UN conferences and summit in the economic, social, environmental and related field during the past 15 years. One delegation said that the MDGs were a veritable “locomotive” of the global development agenda.

There was a general agreement that ECOSOC should play a central role in the follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits, as well as in the achievement of the MDGs. They noted that because of the breadth of its mandate and its convening power, ECOSOC is especially well placed to serve as a platform for systematic and comprehensive monitoring of overall progress in the implementation of the UN development agenda, as well as for holding continuous dialogue, and for generating new ideas on the most conducive national and international environment for development, as highlighted in the Report of the Secretary-General. In this context, several delegations called for a further strengthening of ECOSOC, while some underlined the importance of streamlining and improving consistency in the intergovernmental process – with more efficient meetings, clearer focus, and working methods aimed at implementation rather than re-opening existing commitments.

Member States expressed their support for the convening of an **annual meeting at the ministerial level** to review and assess the implementation of the outcomes of major UN conferences and the Millennium Development Goals. Several speakers said that the functional commissions, in accordance with their mandates, should continue to have primary responsibility for the review and assessment of progress made in implementing outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits. While speakers agreed that the working methods of the functional commissions should be further improved, one delegation favoured a harmonization of the functional commissions’ multi-year programmes of work and their periodic cycles. Other delegates, in line with GA resolution 57/270B, did not deem it appropriate to apply a uniform approach. Several speakers noted that by bringing more predictability and certainty to its own programme, the Council would enable the functional commissions to better prepare their contributions to the work of the Council and stressed the importance of a multi year programme of work in this regard. Moreover, the Consolidated Report on the work of the functional commissions should be used more effectively in the work of ECOSOC.

The proposal put forward by the Secretary-General for a **High-Level Development Cooperation Forum** found the general support of delegations, though there were some divergent views on the purpose of such forum. One delegation said that the Forum should discuss global economic problems and assess emerging challenges and threats in the economic, social, environmental and humanitarian fields and promote response to them. Another delegation proposed that the forum review global, regional and national strategies and policies for sustainable development cooperation. Various views were also expressed with respect to the modalities of the meeting, in particular with regard the segment during which the meeting should be held. Options proposed during the debate included holding the Forum during the High-Level segment or for the High-Level segment to be replaced by the Forum. With regard to participation, delegations said that the Forum could bring together member states, international organizations,

the private sector and civil society and that it should make use of the work of the regional and the functional commissions.

Several delegations supported the proposal of a **voluntary peer-review mechanism**. Underlining the complexity of peer reviews, a speaker suggested the idea of a pilot process of voluntary peer reviews should be discussed in more detail in to evaluate their value added and of the costs involved.

There was general support for the proposal of the Secretary-General to hold **timely meetings to respond to natural disaster and other threats to development and for an important role of ECOSOC in reconstruction and rehabilitation in countries in post-conflict situations**. However, one delegation said that it needed to be further considered how ECOSOC could contribute to post-conflict situations and humanitarian crises and that it should be ensured that ECOSOC's role remained at the level of policy coordination and review, rather than intervening directly in the operational management of specific situations. It was also pointed out by one speaker that the realization of these new initiatives did not require a radical revision of the structure and timing of the current ECOSOC substantive session.

Delegations stressed the significance of the annual **High-Level meetings of ECOSOC with the Bretton Woods institutions the WTO and UNCTAD as a forum which provides an opportunity for all to participate**. There was also a call for enhanced interaction between ECOSOC and the international trade and finance institutions. One delegation said that the issue of bringing the Bretton Woods Institutions not only under improved governance structures but also in closer collaboration with the UN system should be addressed by the forthcoming high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

Delegations generally share the view that at the **country level**, the UN should be seen as operating as one team under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. The need for strong support from all members of the UN Development Group and Specialized Agencies for the Resident Coordinator in promoting system-wide coherence of UN actions to help achieve the agreed development goals and in improving cooperation with the Bretton Woods Institutions was also underlined.

With regard to cooperation among agencies, speakers noted that funding modalities resulted in competitive relationships among the organizations. One delegation also pointed out that adequate and predictable funding needs to be ensured to prevent competition between UN field bodies. Others stressed that ECOSOC's role in providing guidance to the UN funds and programmes, and in promoting policy dialogue and partnership could be strengthened, noting that the UN system of funds and programmes and specialized agencies has been expanding over time in scale and scope of activities, leading to significant **duplication of mandates and actions between different bodies**. Hence, the forthcoming high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly should give a clear mandate to the UN to work out proposals for further streamlining the UN system into more tightly managed entities. One delegation also pointed out that duplication must also be avoided between the work of ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

Several delegations emphasized that ECOSOC reform should also ensure a **strengthening of the links between the normative and operational work of the UN system**. It was underlined that the internationally agreed development goals should form essential elements of national development strategies – including poverty reduction strategies, where they exist. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to the three components of sustainable development – economic development, social development and environmental protection. One delegation

supported a more integrated international environmental governance structure, based on existing institutions and favoured the establishment of a **UN agency for the environment**, based on UNEP with a revised and strengthened mandate.