

ECOSOC 2005 Coordination Segment:
**“Towards achieving internationally agreed development goals, including those
contained in the Millennium Declaration”**

Statement by Ambassador Ernesto Aranibar Quiroga
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Chairman, 44th session of the Commission for Social Development

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Excellencies,

I am privileged to have the opportunity to address this Coordination Segment of the Economic and Social Council to review progress towards achieving the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration.

The Council has before it a broad range of policy inputs as a contribution to its substantive session. These comprise the outcomes of a number of Commissions, including the Commission for Social Development which I have the honour to chair. At its recent 43rd session, which celebrated the 10th anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development, the Commission adopted a Declaration which reaffirmed the basic tenets of Copenhagen: to put people at the centre of development efforts. The 1995 Copenhagen Declaration sought to do this by emphasizing the eradication of poverty as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative. It acknowledged that policies to eradicate poverty must work to increase opportunities and access to resources, as well as to reduce inequalities in the distribution of wealth, opportunities, income and services.

The Declaration, which seeks to link efforts of poverty eradication to the fostering of social integration and to the promotion of employment strategies, will feed directly into the Council's substantive session and, significantly, the World Summit review of the MDGs this September. I am pleased to say that, in this context, the Declaration recognized that the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and the attainment of the MDGs are mutually reinforcing.

In addressing the progress towards the MDGs, whether we are talking about poverty and hunger, education and health, or water and sanitation, it is important that linkages and complementarities be seen in the different approaches of the commissions. Our immediate challenge is clear: to ensure that the outcomes have an impact on the Millennium Declaration review in September. At the same time, however, we need to attach greater efforts to forging linkages, especially in regards to the integration of economic and social policies, and to address the needs and aspirations elaborated at UN Conferences of the Least Developed and Middle-Income Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States and landlocked developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition.

Mr. Chairman,

The Commission for Social Development works on behalf of the poor, the unemployed and the excluded – those whose plight is defended by proxy every February at our Commission. Their struggles against lives of poverty, inequality and social exclusion, however, are experienced not annually, but day after day and then passed on to future generations as a bitter inheritance. Heads of State in Copenhagen began to chart a way to deal with these challenges, but the obstacles to overcome them sadly remain as evident today as they did 10 years ago.

The first commitment of Copenhagen acknowledged that an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment must be created to achieve social development. This call underscored the importance world leaders placed on an enabling environment, both at the national and international level. The question of how to create or even enlarge the quality of such an environment continues to be part of a vibrant debate that has potential for a compelling impact at the Millennium review. I hope that this critical issue is guided by discussions that reflect a deeper understanding of the social dimensions of globalization and the need to mobilize new and additional financial resources for social development.

At its 43rd session in February 2005, the Commission addressed financing for social development in the context of its 10-year review of Copenhagen. It acknowledged that in order to increase the flow of resources available for social development, current levels of ODA must be raised as soon as possible to reach the target of 0.7 per cent by 2015. In this context I would like to recognize the Monterrey Consensus, and I would also like to welcome the recent initiative of the Group of 8 industrial nations to cancel the debt of some of the world's poorest nations. However, while positive, if it is not part of an integrated strategy to mobilize new resources it will be insufficient to help countries escape the trap of hunger, disease and economic stagnation. The Council should therefore urge Member States at the World Summit in September to deliver on existing commitments, including the achievement of Goal 8 of the MDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

A decision was taken at the 43rd session of the Commission for Social Development on the future organization and methods of work. The Commission decided to organize its future sessions in a series of two-year action-oriented implementation cycles. I look forward to the 2006 session and reviewing how the methods of work will facilitate the implementation of conference outcomes.

The priority theme for the 2006 session will be the Review of the first UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, 1997 – 2006. This will be an opportunity for governments and other stakeholders to examine the multidimensional aspects of poverty elaborated at Copenhagen. Yet, even though Copenhagen helped to put poverty front and centre in

development policy and discourse, the disengagement in policy-making of the other two core issues of the Social Summit of employment and social integration, is disturbing.

The injection of these “missing links” into the broader development agenda, resulting from the outcomes of the major UN summits and conferences and particularly within the context of poverty eradication, is vital if we are to build more inclusive societies. I therefore urge the Millennium review to reaffirm the commitment of the 10-year review of Copenhagen to include measures to foster social integration when designing policies for poverty eradication, and to establish employment as a key component of any development strategy.

The World Summit offers us a unique opportunity to renew the momentum to advance the social agenda. We are all aware of the need to strengthen UN bodies concerned with the integration of economic and social development issues. Closer working relationships are required to adequately address the root and structural causes of poverty and their relationship to employment and social integration. Greater effort is also needed to strengthen the coalition of multilateral institutions as a powerful force for equity and social justice.

The Council should emphasize, for consideration of the September World Summit, the need to ensure that social dimensions of macroeconomic policies are seriously addressed by the MDG review. In this regard it is important that greater coordination take place between the social ministries and ministries of foreign affairs, finance and trade when formulating economic and social policies.

Mr. Chairman,

If measures are really taken to achieve the MDGs, the targets will be reached, but only if we give priority to the needs of the people, especially the poorest. By doing so we must also work in partnership with civil society and the private sector in the broadest sense, including in the call for a more equitable world economy. The aims of the Millennium Declaration can be complete if the issues of social development receive their appropriate recognition both in the outcome and in our vision of development, security and human rights.

Thank you.