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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

ADDRESS TO THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT
OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
New York, 29 June 2005

Mr. President.
Excellencies.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to you at such an important moment in our work for development and in our efforts to revitalize the United Nations. I would like to start with a few words about the global economy, and then offer some thoughts on the 2005 World Summit and the contribution that ECOSOC can make to that historic event.

The state of the world economy remains robust. One of the more striking aspects of the strong growth we have seen in recent years is that it is widespread among developing countries and economies in transition. Another is the resurgence of growth in sub-Saharan Africa. Many African countries are achieving annual per capita growth of 3 per cent, and are expected to reach more than 5 per cent this year.

These are promising trends. But they are not free from risks, such as higher oil prices and, especially, current global economic imbalances in the trade and fiscal areas, which could stall momentum.

And our biggest challenge is still with us: to translate growth into development for all. In most developing countries, we continue to see high rates of unemployment and under-employment. In Africa, the current and even projected rate of growth is just not enough to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The message is clear: economic growth is vital, but not sufficient by itself. If economic growth is to make greater inroads against poverty, there is a need for smarter policies, more resources and closer partnerships. Only then will the global economy bring people in from the margins. Only then will the benefits of globalization reach all people, including those who need it most.

Mr. President,

The World Summit offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to *give* a major boost to our efforts to reach the development goals. It is also a chance to advance the broader development agenda and the larger challenges of development that confront us, in particular such core issues as growing inequality, persistent gender inequality, and increasing the participation of developing countries in global economic governance.

Today, there is reason to feel encouraged.

I hope other donors will follow the lead of the European Union, which has agreed to a substantial increase in official development assistance over the next decade, including a timetable for reaching the 0.7 per cent target for official development assistance by 2015. I am especially pleased that half this increase is to be used in Africa.

The commitment of the Group of Eight countries to reach agreements on significant debt relief for the poorest countries is another very promising step.

I hope similarly strong political will can be brought to bear to successfully conclude the Doha trade negotiations, so that developing countries can compete in the global trading system on a fair and equal basis.

Of course, it is not just developed countries, but also developing countries that must do their part. That means devising national strategies bold enough to meet the development goals. It also means promoting accountable and transparent governance, adopting policies that will stimulate the private sector, and investing in human capital through education and health.

Such steps are vital. But as I stressed in my report, "In Larger Freedom", development will be neither meaningful nor sustainable unless, at the same time, we also ensure security and respect for human rights. After all, developing countries suffer disproportionately from armed conflict, the proliferation of small arms and denials of human rights. Their development prospects would also be dealt a blow should there be a collapse of the international regimes which currently hold in check the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. An expensive arms race would likely divert even more funds from development than such expenditures do already. And any actual use of a nuclear weapon would have devastating effects on the world economy as a whole.

My report has stressed these and other links. My hope is that Member States will recognize that if they want others to cooperate on issues to which they give priority, they themselves must extend a helping hand on issues to which others give priority. We must move ahead on all three fronts -- development, security and human rights -- together and simultaneously.

Mr. President,

The 2005 World Summit is also an opportunity to fortify ECOSOC itself.

As a central body for articulating development policy and ensuring policy coherence, this Council has unique strengths. It is well placed to promote an integrated approach to development. It is the only organ mandated to coordinate the activities of the UN system and to engage with non-governmental organizations, which are our increasingly vital partners. Along with its extensive network of functional and regional commissions, ECOSOC has many assets to build on. Its overriding task now is to follow through on the development commitments that have emerged from UN conferences and summits of the past decade-and-a-half. The proposals in my report, "In Larger Freedom", focus on three related dimensions of this "implementation challenge".

First, we need to bring the various strands of implementation together. We need to engage leaders, policy makers and all the capacities available in the UN [system](#), so that our regular reviews of progress lead to concrete, mutually reinforcing action. Therefore, I have suggested that the Council hold annual ministerial level assessments. If approached in an inclusive, participatory way, they could help maintain momentum toward the goals.

Second, we need to connect, in a much more systematic manner, policy discussions and operational activities on the ground. There is a need for a platform, an event, a gathering that brings together all key development actors and where all aspects of development cooperation can be addressed in terms of their consistency and coherence, their responsiveness to the policies being advocated, and their effectiveness in generating and sustaining significant results for countries. It is with this in mind that I have called on the Council to convene a biennial, high-level Development Cooperation Forum.

Third, we need to respond to threats and challenges in the economic and social area with the same urgency that is brought to peace and security crises. Whether we are confronting a devastating tsunami in Asia, a famine in Africa or a debt crisis in Latin America, our responses must not only offer immediate relief, but also address the broader development dimensions. We cannot predict, but we can and must prepare, through effective early warning and a strong culture of prevention. These, too, are "coordination" tasks for which ECOSOC is well suited. But it is certainly not the kind of coordination that can await the annual substantive session of ECOSOC. That is why I have recommended that the Council should hold timely meetings to respond to events that may seriously affect development progress.

Such steps are intended to make the Council more flexible and dynamic, and ultimately more relevant to those who look to it for guidance. I have also called on ECOSOC to reinforce its links with the Security Council, in order to deal more systematically with the economic and social dimensions of conflicts. In the same vein, I have suggested that ECOSOC work closely with the proposed Peacebuilding Commission, building on the efforts that ECOSOC has made over the years to sensitize the world to the special economic and social challenges facing countries emerging from conflict.

I look forward to working with you in our common effort to ensure that ECOSOC can do all these things and play its full and proper role.

Mr. President,

The draft Summit outcome put forward by the President of the General Assembly earlier this month is an important step towards decisive action in September. Despite differences among Member States, we can see that agreement is within reach on many of the main issues and proposals, including those of direct concern to ECOSOC. We must now spare no effort, in the crucial period ahead, to make sure that the 2005 World Summit succeeds in taking bold steps toward making poverty history. I wish you every success as you decide what ECOSOC can do to bring that goal to fruition. Thank you very much.