

Volume 5— Number 1

# ECOSOC News

## Newsletter on the work of the United Nations Economic and Social Council

The 54-member Economic and Social Council serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and to the United Nations. It makes or initiates studies and reports; makes recommendations on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters; and promotes respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Subsidiary bodies, commissions and committees of ECOSOC carry out its year-round work. ECOSOC strengthens cooperation within the United Nations system, coordinates the work of the specialized agencies and consults with non-governmental organizations. A substantive session of the Council is convened annually in July, and supplementary formal meetings as well as informal panels on topical issues are held throughout the year.

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### The Members of the Bureau of ECOSOC (2006)

#### President of ECOSOC:

H. E. Ambassador Ali Hachani (Tunisia)

#### Vice-Presidents of ECOSOC:

H. E. Ambassador Léo Mérorès (Haïti)  
H. E. Ambassador Hjálmar W. Hannesson (Iceland)  
H. E. Ambassador Mr. Dalius Cekuolis (Lithuania)  
H. E. Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka)



## H. E. Mr. Ali Hachani of Tunisia Elected President of ECOSOC for 2006

H. E. Mr. Ali Hachani (Tunisia), was elected President of ECOSOC for 2006 on 17 January 2006, replacing H.E. Mr. Munir Akram (Pakistan). In accepting the office, Mr. Hachani stressed that the United Nations continued to have the arduous task of fully promoting social progress and improving living standards, especially for the world's poorest countries. The 2005 World Summit Outcome -- which assigned new mandates and functions to ECOSOC to advance the development agenda and thus, lift millions of people from deprivation and destitution -- was a substantial breakthrough in development cooperation. The Summit mandated ECOSOC to promote the global policy dialogue, to undertake annually a Ministerial review of the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and constitute itself into a development cooperation forum, among others actions. In addition, Ambassador Hachani pointed out that the outcome of last November's World Summit on the Information Society assigned the Council the task of providing oversight to the implementation and follow up to the Summit decisions, particularly through a renewed Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

Mr. Hachani also emphasized the importance of open and inclusive dialogue in the Council, with broad representation from all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia. The theme of the 2006 High-level segment of the Council — Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development — that is also related to the forthcoming General Assembly's high-level dialogue on international migration and development provided a good opportunity for the Council to reassert itself. ECOSOC was uniquely positioned to promote improved and coordinated responses from the United Nations and other partners to humanitarian disasters. Last year's meetings on



H.E. Mr. Ali Hachani , President of ECOSOC for 2006

food crises in Africa and the avian flu crisis illustrated the Council's potential to respond to situations that threatened long-term development.

On the same occasion, the outgoing President, H.E. Mr. Munir Akram (Pakistan), said the South-East Asian tsunami and the recent earthquake in northern Pakistan brought home the need for a comprehensive and coordinated international response to humanitarian crises, in which ECOSOC should play a key role. He noted that the Council had stepped up its involvement in such issues in the previous year, sponsoring such events as "The Voices against Poverty" at the 2005 High-level segment, on the aftermath of the Asian tsunami and briefings on Africa's food crises. The Council also registered unprecedented participation by a number of Heads of State and Government, the heads of the United Nations agencies, and leaders from civil society and the private sector. This notwithstanding, much remained to be done, including implementing the 2005 World Summit mandates and operationalizing the Council's participation in the Peacebuilding Commission. All these required the strengthening of ECOSOC and ensuring that it has the resources to rise to its new challenges.

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In the same event, the President of the General Assembly, H. E. Mr. Jan Eliasson (Sweden), expressed hope that ECOSOC would become an organ of enhanced impact and said the General Assembly would work closely with Mr. Hachani and the Bureau to turn the agreements reached in 2005 into action. The Council's work had brought key decision makers together and helped focus the world's attention on serious matters. Last year had been the year of commitments, and 2006 would be the year of implementation, given that less than 10 years remain until 2015, and yet much of the world still lagged behind in meeting the millennium targets.

The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. José Antonio Ocampo stressed that ECOSOC's purpose was to help drive implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, and that 2006 would be the year when the "rubber hits the road". The new ECOSOC functions would make it possible for the intergovernmental process to deal in much greater depth with monitoring and evaluating progress and with realigning our efforts accordingly. The annual ministerial-level reviews for tracking and evaluating the progress in the implementation of the development goals could provide a meaningful

assessment, especially when enriched by national presentations and voluntary reviews. The Global Policy Dialogue and Development Cooperation Forum would strengthen engagement among the member states and outside actors, including those dealing with North-South, South-South and bilateral cooperation.

The representatives of South Africa, on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, and of Austria, on behalf of the European Union, stressed their support and determination to assist the Council in implementing the decisions of the 2005 World Summit.

The countries which are Vice-Presidents of the Council for 2006 are Haiti for the Latin America and Caribbean States Group; Iceland for the Western European and Other States Group; Lithuania for the Eastern European States; and Sri Lanka for the Asia and Pacific States Group. :

## Meetings of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups November 2005 — March 2006

**The ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi** held two meetings with H.E. Mrs. Antoinette Batumubwira, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burundi, on 29 November 2005 and 26 January 2006.

The meetings presented an opportunity for the Minister to brief delegations and other partners on progress made in the recovery process of Burundi. The Minister stressed that while the year 2005 was devoted to putting in place new institutions in Burundi, 2006 was regarded as the year of reconstruction. She had

added that while the authorities had prepared an emergency support programme to address the most pressing needs of the population, a longer-term poverty reduction strategy was being finalized and would be presented to a donor conference in September.

In addition to members of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, the meetings were also attended by representatives of donor countries and countries of the region, the European Commission and the

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African Union as well as representatives of UN system entities and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

**The ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau** met on 22 March 2006. At this meeting, the Group was briefed by the Representative of the Secretary General on the situation in the country. The main development was the spillover to Guinea-Bissau in the fighting by factions of the secessionist movement MFDC of Senegal and the military action taken by the Government of Senegal. As a result, there is potential humanitarian crisis in the border region. The United Nations country team, supported by NGOs is providing assistance to the 6000 displaced residents of the area.

**The ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti** held a meeting on the status of

the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) and preparations of the Poverty Reduction Strategy for Haiti on 9 January 2006. The current ICF aims at facilitating the transition and creating the ground for longer-term development. As it is a comprehensive assessment of the needs of Haiti, with clear objectives and commitments by national and international actors, it has contributed to greater coherence among donors and improved monitoring and measurement of results achieved.

The Group also organized a meeting on 14 March 2006 with H.E. Mr. Roland Pierre, Minister of Planning and External Cooperation of Haiti and members of the *Cellule de Reflexion Strategique (CRS)* of the Haitian government. During this meeting, representatives of the CRS presented its main objectives and modalities of work. The CRS will be working at the technical level on long-term development plan of Haiti, in partnership with the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group. :

## **Noteworthy**

- At the 3rd meeting of the 2006 organizational session of the Economic and Social Council, which took place on 10 February 2006, Council members approved the provisional agenda for the ECOSOC's July substantive session. By so doing, they endorsed prior decisions, including that their high-level segment would be devoted to consideration of creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development. The coordination segment would be devoted to sustained economic growth for social development, including the eradication of poverty and hunger. (For more information, please visit the following internet site: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/ecosoc6190.doc.htm>)
- At the 74th meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, which took place on 27 March 2006, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to oversee the system-wide follow-up of the outcomes of the World Summit of the Information Society and to review, at the ECOSOC substantive session of 2006, the mandate, agenda and composition of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. (For more information, please visit the following internet sites: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/ga10451.doc.htm>; <http://www.itu.int/wsis/>)

## Upcoming Events

### **Preparatory Meeting for the High-level segment of the Economic and Social Council 4-5 April 2006**

The theme for the 2006 High-level segment of the substantive session of ECOSOC is “Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development”.

The choice of this theme is timely as there is now consensus that productive employment and decent work will have to be at the centre of economic and social policies designed to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, particularly the central Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015. This view was endorsed by Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit who declared: “*We strongly support a fair globalization and resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our national and international macro-economic policies as well as poverty reduction strategies. These measures should also encompass the elimination of child labour. We also resolve to protect the human rights of workers*”.

The resolve to make productive employment and decent work a global goal is not entirely new. At the Social Summit in Copenhagen, world leaders laid down the objective of promoting the goal of full employment as a basic priority of economic and social policies. But progress to promote full and productive employment has been disappointing.

Globalization has so far not led to the creation of sufficient and sustainable decent employment opportunities around the world. According to the ILO, half of the world's workers still do not earn enough to lift themselves and their families above the US\$2 a day poverty line. Moreover, global economic growth is increasingly failing to translate into new and better jobs that would lead to a reduction in poverty. There are over 88 million unemployed youth around the world, comprising nearly half of the world's total unemployment. This situation is economically and socially unsustainable. Urgent action has to be taken to find ways to implement the commitment of Heads of State and Government to promote employment, and to reverse the trend of the past where job and income security for the world's workers has been an afterthought in global development.

In order to contribute towards a successful outcome of the High-level segment of ECOSOC, a major informal preparatory event will be held at United Nations in New York, 4-5 April 2006, to allow Member States, organizations of the UN system, and stakeholders (employers and workers organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, foundations) to examine the issues and make recommendations on the theme of the High-level segment.

There will be four keynote addresses and six roundtable discussions. A common

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theme which runs through all the roundtables is that making decent work a global goal needs stronger commitment and partnership by donors and international institutions, and a clear sense of common purpose at the country level.

The round tables put up for discussion a variety of strategies to move forward on this challenge which can be summarised as follows:

- Global, regional and national policies should be refocused on productivity-enhancing investments and policies to generate employment for unskilled and semi-skilled labour, in rural and urban areas.
- The human capital of the poor needs to be enhanced through greater access to education, skills, health care, improvement in physical infrastructure and land tenure rights, access to credit, and the creation of social safety nets.
- Employment should cut across the programmatic and sectoral interventions of UN system organizations at the country level. Steps should be taken to embed decent work goals into relevant national and international policies, as well as poverty reduction strategy processes, and national UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). This would require the integration of economic and social objectives in the areas of employment promotion, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.
- Multilateral, regional and national development cooperation actors should systematically integrate the objectives of productive employment and decent work in their policy dialogue and programming cycles with partner countries and regions. Related to this, there should be a joint endeavour to strengthen the social

dimension of globalization through the mainstreaming of employment in development policies and programmes.

The core messages of the issues note for the six roundtables include:

**i) Growth and employment:** The note stresses that “Creating a National Environment Conducive to Full Employment and Decent Work” is partly based on the observation in the Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization that “dealing with globalization begins at home”. Its major concern is how to strengthen capacities and mobilize partnerships and whether at the international level establishing guidelines, monitoring progress and setting up a global peer review process would contribute to a better set of national policies allowing national policy makers to move towards stronger commitment and action to achieve full employment and decent work.

**ii) An integrated global agenda to achieve full employment and decent work:** The note observes that globalization has set in motion a process of far-reaching change. It stresses the need for policy coherence at the international level in the globalisation process. It also raises four interrelated issues—trade, international finance, global macro-economic policies and technology—which are important to a global agenda and emphasizes the need to include social issues and, particularly, attainment of full employment and job expectations as one of its main objectives.

**iii) Increasing employment opportunities and productivity of low income groups in rural and urban areas:** The note focuses on how to create a virtuous cycle of improved productivity, and boosting rural employment and incomes through diversification and increased integration of agricultural and non-farm activities. It also highlights the necessity of decentralization and encouragement of local development strategies and raises the issue of how to improve the interests of low-income producers and workers

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in the rural and urban areas in national development frameworks including poverty reduction strategies.

*iv) Working out of crises:* The note stresses that livelihood recovery and job creation are indispensable for helping people out of crisis, in disasters as well as in post-conflict situations and that such a concept must be central to all recovery strategies.

*v) Promoting productive employment and decent work for women and young people:* The note spells out the barriers to productive employment that women and young people need to overcome. It tries to identify national policies, programmes and initiatives that encourage decent work for women and young people and are most effective in eliminating all forms of gender discrimination in the world of work. It also raises issues of how to strengthen dialogue and mobilise partnerships to promote productive employment and decent work for women and youth, and the respective roles of governments, social partners, civil society and UN system organizations.

*vi) The challenge of globalization—labour migration:* The note raises four issues: migration and development, protection of migrant workers, international cooperation, and the role of the international community.

It is hoped that these roundtables may assist ECOSOC in enhancing coherence of the organizations of the UN system in their efforts to support countries to give effect to their commitment to promote productive employment and decent work. It will also contribute to an initiative led by the ILO, and involving other international organizations, on the development of an “employment promotion tool” to guide the management of action of the UN system in this area. The objective of such a tool would be to facilitate the assessment of the potential of the policies, strategies, programmes and activities of the UN agencies, individually and collectively, in terms of employment and decent work outcomes. This would assist organizations of the system to design and promote those policy options within their domains and areas of action, which can maximize Member State’s efforts to improve the quantity and quality of jobs. For more information, please visit the website of the event at <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/hls2006/preparatory.html> ;

**Special High-Level Meeting of the ECOSOC with the  
Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization,  
and the United Nations Conference on Trade and  
Development  
New York, 24 April 2006**



*The 2005 Meeting of the BWIs, WTO and UNCTAD*

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Preparations are under way for the 2006 special high-level meeting of ECOSOC with the BWIs, WTO and UNCTAD, which will take place on Monday, 24 April 2006 in New York, the day following the spring meetings of the International Monetary and Financial Committee and the Development Committee in Washington. This year's meeting aims to contribute to a follow-up of the Monterrey Conference and the 2005 World Summit. A major feature of the meeting is to continue to strengthen the partnership that brings together the communities of finance, trade, development cooperation and foreign affairs. This spirit was at the heart of the Monterrey Consensus.

The focus of the meeting is on the following four sub-themes, within the overall framework of "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the 2005 World Summit Outcome": (a) Implementation of and support for National Development Strategies, towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs; (b) Fulfilling the development dimension of the Doha Work Programme: Next steps, including in the area of

"Aid for Trade"; (c) External debt: Implementing and building on current initiatives to enhance debt sustainability; and (d) Supporting the development efforts of middle-income developing countries.

The **President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Ali Hachani** will open the meeting. The **Secretary-General, Kofi Annan** is expected to deliver the opening address, followed by the **President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson**. With regard to the format of the meeting, it is envisaged that the structure of the meeting will be similar to that of the past two years, namely: a morning plenary meeting with a set of brief presentations by the chairpersons of the Development Committee, the International Monetary and Financial Committee, the WTO General Council and the President of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board, followed by several simultaneous multi-stakeholder roundtables. The outcome document of the meeting is envisaged to be a President's summary, which will be circulated among participants at ECOSOC's substantive session in July. For more information, please visit the website of the event at <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/bwi2006/index.html> !

## **The Economic and Social Council NGO/Civil Society Forum 6 April 2006; and 20-21 April 2006**

An ECOSOC NGO/Civil Society forum will be held on 6 April 2006, and 20-21 April 2006 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Organized in conjunction with the preparatory meeting for the High-level segment of ECOSOC, which takes place on 4 and 5 April, the Forum will enable nongovernmental stakeholders to make their voice heard on the theme of employment and decent work for all. The inputs from these discussions will be used as civil society contributions towards the High-level segment in July 2006, in the preparation

of the documentation for segment, including the report of the Secretary-General. The Forum will be divided in several sessions devoted to job creation in disaster-hit areas, enabling factors for decent work, rural development and the informal economy. NGO representatives can couple their participation to the forum with attendance to the 4 and 5 April preparatory meeting, where policy-makers, academicians, trade-unionists and

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civil society representatives from around the world will share ideas and make policy recommendations on various aspects of this year's theme.

In the second part of the NGO forum, to be held on 20-21 April 2006, the NGO Section of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs is co-sponsoring an Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) video-conference entitled "VI Info-Poverty World Conference" on 20-21 April 2006 at United Nations Headquarters (conference room 5), to discuss the outcome of the World Summit on Information Society. Several best practices in the area of ICTs for poverty alleviation

will be presented. The themes to be discussed include public-private partnership for global connectivity and e-services, software technology transfer at no or low cost, corporate social responsibility in the area of ICTs, indigenous people and ICTs, and the contribution of ICTs to reach the Millennium Development Goals. †

**Development Forum on Productive Employment and Decent Work, organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
New York, 8-9 May 2006**

The 2005 World Summit helped crystallize the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), into a broad and compelling United Nations development agenda. Heads of State and Government have agreed that productive employment and decent work have to be at the centre of economic and social policies designed to achieve the central Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015. In this context, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will dedicate its High-level segment of 2006 to the topic of "Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development."

It is against this background that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) is organizing a Seminar on Employment on 8-9 May 2006. This meeting, drawing

on the lessons learned, will help define policy directions towards optimizing the impact of full and productive employment on sustainable development.

The Seminar on Employment will feature presentations by a number of eminent specialists on a range of issues related to employment, including, among others, the nexus between growth, employment and poverty; macro-economic policies for productive employment; labour market flexibility and decent work; social protection options and rural employment. High-level policymakers, Ambassadors, representatives of agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, the World Bank, the IMF, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia, media and others are expected to attend the meeting. †

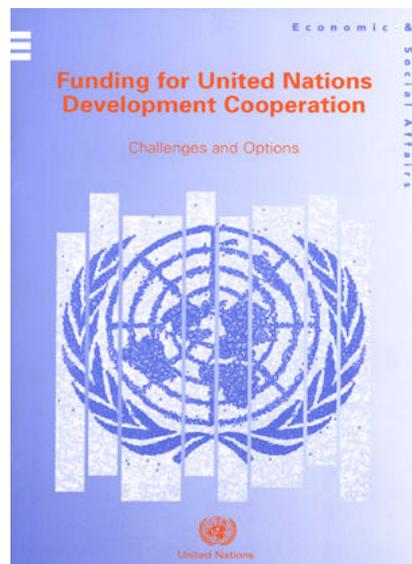
## **NEW DESA PUBLICATION**

### **“Funding for United Nations Development Cooperation: Challenges and Options”**

**Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination,  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

This book analyses the mobilization of resources to finance the operational activities of the United Nations system for development in the context of the current challenges that the international community and the developing countries face to achieve the objectives of the development agenda in the new millennium. The book explores the various options to enhance funding for the development cooperation activities of the organizations of the United Nations system. The analysis highlights the need for a strong commitment to mobilize and stabilize the flow of a “critical mass” of resources to enable the system effectively to play its supportive role at the country level, helping developing countries in translating internationally agreed global objectives into their own national development strategies.

This publication makes reference to the evolving architecture of international development cooperation, alternative forms of development cooperation and new patterns of Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocation. These important elements oriented the debate at the 2005 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the funding for United Nations development cooperation and its role in the new international context, a debate that Member States should be encouraged to continue with renewed determination and commitment, in the follow-up to the September Summit on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. ;



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For more information on the Economic and Social Council, please visit:

<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/>

For further information on the work of the UN Secretariat in economic and social affairs, please visit DESA News online at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/desanews.htm>

**2006 ECOSOC Substantive Session in Geneva, Switzerland:**

- High-level segment: 3-5 July 2006
- Dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions: 6 July 2006
- Coordination segment: 6-10 July 2006
- Operational activities segment: 11-13 July 2006
- Humanitarian affairs segment: 14-19 July 2006
- General segment: 19-27 July 2006
- Conclusion of the work of the Council: 27-28 July 2006

**For more information on the “Basic programme of work of the Council”, please download the document, E/2006/L1 on Official Document System of the United Nations (ODS) at <http://documents.un.org/>**