



## **The President of the Economic and Social Council**

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### **Statement of the President of the Economic and Social Council H.E. Dr. Ivan Šimonoviæ, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia at the General Assembly Plenary Debate on NEPAD, 16 September 2002**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honoured to participate, on behalf of the Economic and Social Council at the plenary debate on NEPAD. The Council welcomes the opportunity to make a contribution to the debate on Africa whose sustainable development remains a high priority for its members.

I am pleased to say that the Economic and Social Council was among the first, if not the first to welcome both the launching of the African Union and this very important Africa-designed and Africa-owned Initiative at its High-level Segment which was held a few days after the OAU Summit in Lusaka last year.

Indeed, as you may recall, last year, the Council devoted its High-level Segment to the theme “*The role of the United Nations in support of African countries to achieve sustainable development*”. This meeting was mandated by the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) as the final link in the preparatory processes leading up to its final review and appraisal. It also served an important purpose of being the first occasion after the Millennium Summit of September 2000 to address how the United Nations, as part of the international community, was fulfilling its commitment to “meeting the special needs of Africa” as called for in Section VII of the Millennium Declaration.

A number of important messages emerged from that meeting which are important both for the final review and appraisal of the UN-NADAF and for the Plenary Debate on NEPAD. There was a strong consensus as reflected in the Ministerial Communiqué that there should be no new initiatives for Africa but that the United Nations system, in particular, should provide effective, coordinated response to the Initiative, utilizing it as the framework for support to the region.

There was also general agreement on the critical importance of peace, democracy and good governance as a foundation for sustainable development in Africa and the need for a comprehensive, integrated approach to the peace and development at national and subregional levels. Nowhere does Africa need the assistance of the international community more than in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. I am pleased to say that on 15 July 2002, the Council established an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict. The Group will be small and flexible and it will provide advice to the Council on how to ensure that the assistance of the international community in supporting the country concerned is adequate, coherent, well-coordinated and effective. The Council will use its coordinating function to promote, in a practical way, system-wide efforts to address the economic, social and humanitarian dimensions of post conflict peacebuilding as well as to mobilize needed attention and resources for individual countries. As I announced at the conclusion of this year's substantive session, Guinea-Bissau has requested the creation of an Ad Hoc Advisory Group which the Council will be considering shortly.

Member States have repeatedly declared that the Council should be actively engaged in addressing the economic and social aspects of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This is a concrete example where the Council will try to mobilize the international community to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict and compliment the work of the Security Council so that there is a seamless transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and longer-term reconstruction and development. Indeed, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group presents us all with the opportunity to promote wider policy coherence with the organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, and through its

intergovernmental processes, influence the wider donor community on the need to take proactive measures to prevent the reemergence of conflict. Here, the Council will work closely with the African Union and its subregional organizations.

Mr. President,

Let me use this opportunity to draw attention to some disturbing trends. There is growing evidence that most African countries, especially the least developed, will not be able to achieve several of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 largely because of the lack of adequate financial resources, weak institutional capacities to implement the action plans required to meet the goals, the devastating consequences of HIV/AIDS, and in some countries, conflict.

The Economic and Social Council will also pay particular attention to the 34 least developed African countries as required by the mandate given to it by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The Council now has an annual agenda item on the review and coordination of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs and it will ensure the efficient and effective follow-up to the Brussels Conference.

More than that, in its follow-up to the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, the Council, which has been given the important responsibility for follow-up, will work with the Bretton Woods Institutions to ensure that the issues of debt, market access, ODA and foreign direct investment, which are of such critical importance for Africa's economic recovery, are meaningfully addressed. I believe that the Monterrey Conference has given some momentum to international economic cooperation for poverty reduction, which will benefit Africa. There is a clear recognition that, without adequate resources, there is no chance that African countries will even come close to reaching the MDGs. We will work to ensure that there is no let up in the momentum for Africa.

I am glad to inform you that Africa featured strongly in this year's High-level Segment, which had as its theme, *the contribution of human resources development, in particular health and education, to the process of development*. Two High-level Panels were held

on how Africa is doing in relation to the human resources aspects of the MDGs in general, and on the health-related MDGs in particular. Strong concern was expressed that, on present trends, the majority of African countries will not achieve these goals. In its Ministerial Communiqué, the Council offered strong support for NEPAD to achieve, inter alia, its human resources development objectives.

Mr. President  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I assure you that the Council stands by its commitment made at its High-level Segment of 2001 that it will do what is required to ensure the sustainable development of the region. On its behalf, I urge Africa's partners to renew the commitment we made at last year's High-level Segment, to Africa's sustainable development.

I look forward to working with the African Union, its subregional organizations and its members in this respect.

I thank you.