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**Statement by H.E. Ms. Marjatta Rasi, Permanent Representative of Finland to the  
United Nations and President of the Economic and Social Council**

**International Donors Conference on Haiti  
Washington D.C., 20 July 2004**

Madame Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to address this meeting today in my capacity of President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the contribution of the Council to the international support provided to Haiti.

First of all, I would like to recall the mandate and the specificity of the Economic and Social Council within the United Nations machinery. Established by the Charter, the Council is responsible for promoting higher standards of living, full employment, economic and social progress, health, education and cultural cooperation, as well as encouraging human rights and fundamental freedoms. In fact, ECOSOC's purview extends to over 70% of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system. Composed of 54 member States, it covers more than 15 subsidiary bodies, among them the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on the Status of Women and the UN Regional Commissions, and maintains close relationships with the Executive Boards of the United Nations Funds and Programmes, such as UNDP and UNICEF, and with specialized agencies of the UN family. Because of this large mandate and its relationships with a wide range of actors, the Council plays a catalytic role in bringing together economic and social stakeholders, including NGOs and the private sector, to address key international challenges.

A major development in the work of the Council over the last five years is its increased relationships with the Bretton Woods Institutions. It has become a routine that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund interact with the Council on various issues on its agenda. This collaboration has been strengthened with the annual spring meeting of the Council with finance Ministers heading key Committees of the Bretton Woods Institutions. This is all the more important as ECOSOC was assigned a primary role in monitoring and assessing the follow-up provided to the Monterrey Consensus. My presence in Washington today further testifies to this increased collaboration between our Institutions. I am pleased to be at the World Bank premises, who co-hosts this event. I am sure that on the situation of Haiti also, we will join our efforts and promote synergy, and I am glad to see the high level of coordination between the Government of Haiti, the European Commission, the World Bank and UNDP in preparation for this meeting.

Within the UN intergovernmental machinery, the Economic and Social Council has increased working relationships with the Security Council. For a long time, UN bodies have tended to work in isolation. This is not the case anymore. The need for a comprehensive approach to issues on the UN agenda has emerged and is now recognized as a condition for meaningful and sustainable solutions. Calls have been made for a comprehensive approach to peace and development that encompasses root causes of political instability and conflict, including poverty and social inequities. The Security Council and ECOSOC have therefore increased interaction in recent years.

Indeed, interaction between the Security Council and ECOSOC has already taken place on the situation in Haiti. In 1999, ECOSOC responded to an invitation made by the Security Council to contribute to long term development for Haiti and established an Ad-Hoc Advisory Group. The Group was mandated to make recommendations on how to ensure that international assistance to Haiti was adequate, coherent, well coordinated and effective. The Group recommended that the United Nations system, which was then present in the country through a peace-keeping operation and a human rights monitoring mission, continued its support for the preparations of the elections, human rights

monitoring and police training, a recommendation that led to the establishment of a UN civilian support mission to Haiti.

The Council also requested that all development partners, the UN system, the Bretton Woods Institutions, regional organizations and international NGOs work in close collaboration with the Government of Haiti to that end.

Sadly, the international support to Haiti has been very much limited over the last years. As we all know, following the legislative and presidential elections of 2000, the growing political crisis has kept international donors away from Haiti, although the United Nations and a few others continued to provide technical assistance and other support. As it has been reported to ECOSOC every year since 1999, the normalization of political life was a prerequisite for the return of assistance.

Today, Haiti is slowly recovering after months of political, economic and social stalemate. The transitional government has asserted himself as a strong interlocutor of development partners. On 14 June 2004, the Prime Minister of Haiti asked ECOSOC to set up an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti to help coordinate the development of a long-term programme of assistance to this country in collaboration with the donor community and the Government. Last week, the Council was honored to be briefed by H.E. Mr. Roland Pierre, Minister of Planning, Environment and External Cooperation. Minister Pierre reiterated the request of the Haitian Government to reactivate an Ad Hoc Advisory Group with a vision of ten to fifteen years, to follow up on the current initiatives of the international community, including this donor conference, in a longer term perspective.

As we speak, the Council is considering reactivating an Ad hoc Advisory Group for Haiti, taking duly into account other international initiatives and mechanisms that are being established and operationalized. I am therefore very interested in learning more about the support that donors and other international organizations plan to provide to Haiti at this key moment in the political life of the country. These are valuable elements to take into account in the formulation of a potential role of ECOSOC on these issues.

Excellencies,

In view of the socio-economic situation in Haiti and the urgent need for support, an immediate assistance should be given to this country. Haiti ranks 146<sup>th</sup> in the Index of Human Development set by UNDP and suffers from endemic underdevelopment. Today it is up to us, the International Community, together with the Transitional Authorities of Haiti to engage in a long term vision and support for the development in Haiti.

Thank you for very much for your attention, and I wish you success in this important meeting.