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

**Economic and Social Council, Special High-Level Meeting with the Bretton Woods
Institutions and the World Trade Organization**

New York, 26 April, 2004

Excellencies,
Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to welcome you all to this Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization. For the first time, I would like to extend a special welcome to the Chairman and other representatives of the UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board who will be joining us today.

The Monterrey Consensus set a direct mandate to ECOSOC in the follow up. As President of the Council I feel great responsibility to comply with it. This can only be done jointly with all of you present here today. ECOSOC provides a forum for an exchange, which I hope, will be fully utilized during the course of today's deliberations.

The presence of ministers and senior officials from the member states with their different portfolios as well as from key international development, finance and trade institutions shows the high commitment of the governments and the international community to the Monterrey consensus. We are honored to have Her Excellency President of Finland among the participants.

I would like to welcome as well the Executive Directors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund from Washington. Their full presence is the outcome of intensive efforts together with the Bureau of ECOSOC to deepen our inter-governmental contacts in the spirit of Monterrey, as guided by the decisions of the Council and the General Assembly. I have had also very fruitful preparatory discussions with the WTO and UNCTAD in Geneva to build further our interaction on the common Monterrey agenda. And it is encouraging to have several UN agencies participating.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we will address the overall theme of "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus".

The meeting will also focus on more specific issues in the context of the roundtable discussions. We made a collective effort to structure the agenda in a practical and feasible manner around the basic questions of coherence, coordination and cooperation. It is difficult to cover all current aspects of the Monterrey Consensus in one short meeting. For instance, the question of voice, participation and representation in the international economic and financial decision-making processes is of special interest to a large number of countries. And there are other issues of concern pertaining to the follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus that can be addressed in the relevant round-tables and afternoon debate.

I would also like to remind the participants of this year's substantive session of ECOSOC, which will focus on the least developed countries and other important development themes. Financing for development is part of the wider agenda of the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits. As you know next year all these topics will be reviewed in a comprehensive manner.

The Secretariat has prepared a background document to facilitate our deliberations. We acknowledge the contributions of the other institutions to the report. It contains a set of questions, which are meant as suggestions to elaborate on the various issues. They should not limit the discussions by any means.

DESA's Financing for Development Office organized hearings with civil society and business experts in March. Having chaired them myself, I can vouch for their high quality. Summaries of the hearings are available in this room and will be issued also in all official languages. I look forward to the NGO and private sector participants to bring their views to our discussions today as partners of the Monterrey Consensus.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My summary of today's meeting will be circulated to the ECOSOC members and the UN member states at large. It will be available to all our stakeholders for their consideration as an instrument of further interaction.

I would now like to invite the Secretary-General to say a few words. Mr. Secretary-General, you have the floor.