



*Check against delivery*

**Closing Remarks by  
H.E. Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, President of ECOSOC  
ECOSOC Substantive Session, Geneva  
27 July 2007**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We have come to the end of what has been, in many ways, a ground breaking substantive session. Let me start by thanking all of you for your hard work and your determination to work together in a collaborative spirit. I especially wish to commend the able leadership of my vice-presidents; the many colleagues who have skilfully facilitated the adoption of a number of important resolutions, and the Secretariat for its tireless and effective support.

Some have argued in the past that there were two possible future scenarios for ECOSOC. One was for the Council to gradually drift towards irrelevance and oblivion. The other one was for the Council to thoroughly renew itself in order to fully meet the high expectations under which it was established. I believe this session has contributed to promoting the second scenario.

At the 2005 World Summit, our leaders sent an unmistakable message: The time to convert existing promises into concrete progress is now. We must convert the “global partnership for development” into more than a catchy slogan, and turn it into reality so as to address the most pressing development issues of our day, particularly poverty and hunger.

To this end, our leaders envisioned a Council that is the central platform for realizing the UN development agenda. And gave ECOSOC new functions to enable it to perform that role. We have witnessed these new functions at work for the first time this year, and by all accounts they have infused new meaning to our gatherings, turning them into mechanisms to strengthen accountability for the realization of the agreed goals. The creative new format, the “hands on”, concrete approach and the highly interactive and candid exchanges were especially welcome by many of you. So was the choice of very topical issues for the related discussions surrounding the theme of eradicating poverty and hunger, such as a green revolution in Africa and the challenges of climate change.

The high point of the Annual Ministerial Review was, in my view, the national presentations by the Ministers of six developing countries, which became an occasion for knowledge sharing and information exchange. Inspired by these thought-provoking presentations, several countries – including developed countries – have already volunteered for the next review. It will be a further step forward if next year we can ensure presentations from countries at different stages of development and different perspectives. In this regard, I sincerely welcome the announcement by the Netherlands to volunteer next year. I hope many more will volunteer for such presentations.

By selecting related themes for the AMR and the thematic discussion, the Council has effectively tackled one of the fundamental issues of development, “poverty eradication”, from various perspectives. While the focus during the AMR was mainly on review and assessment of implementation status, the thematic discussion focused on a variety of policies and measures that can be employed to strengthen the link between economic growth and poverty reduction.

I was also encouraged by the very stimulating dialogue at the launch of the Development Cooperation Forum, particularly on the issues of South-South cooperation; aid effectiveness and aid coordination. Focusing on these topics will advance the Council’s role in promoting coordination and coherence in aid delivery.

Moreover, the Ministerial Declaration, adopted by consensus, sends the important message that the international community is united in dealing with the obstacles in the realization of MDG-1.

Given the diversity of issues touched upon and the richness of the debate throughout the High-Level Segment, I will not attempt to summarize the discussions.

*Distinguished delegates,*

The agreement to further extend the Council’s ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Haiti is a clear recognition of the useful contribution ECOSOC can make by promoting an integrated approach in the area of post-conflict peace-building. We now need to continue to ensure that the lessons learnt during the Council’s experience benefit the work of the Peace-building Commission through continuous engagement between these two bodies.

This session has indeed covered a broad array of issues, from the promotion of full employment and decent work to the challenge of ensuring more stable and predictable funding for UN system development activities, from the use of military assets in natural disaster relief, to humanitarian financing mechanisms, just to name but a few. On all of these, the high quality of the debate and ideas put forward reflect the variety of the stakeholders engaged, from Ministers to heads of agencies, from representatives of the private sector to NGOs. This power to convene and mobilize all stakeholders has proved once again one of the Council’s great strengths.

Despite the many achievements during the last four weeks, we cannot rest on our laurels. Indeed, the positive outcome of this session reflects both the thorough preparations and the full and active engagement by all stakeholders throughout the process. It is absolutely critical for the success of the next sessions that all stakeholders remain actively engaged in their preparations and the session itself. Even more urgent, we must rapidly agree on the themes for the coming years, so that preparations by Member States and the UN system can have an early start. I have already requested our colleague Mr. Thomas Gas of Switzerland to intensify his efforts on reaching a decision on the Multi-year work programme. I appeal to all delegations to actively engage in these consultations and adopt a decision at the earliest.

Therefore, while wishing you all a well deserved break, I look forward to completing our pending work with renewed energy in the fall.

Thank you.