



Check against delivery

Statement of the President of ECOSOC at the General Assembly Introduction of the Report of the Economic and Social Council for 2009 (A/64/3)

27 October 2009

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to introduce the 2009 report of the Economic and Social Council contained in document A/64/3.

The most severe global financial crisis since the Great Depression has wreaked havoc on the world economy. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been slowed down and even reversed. The adverse impacts could be long-lasting and damaging for human development.

The Council's work this year should notably be seen in line with the overall effort to help countries weather this storm.

My remarks will focus first on some of the main outcomes of the Council's work so far and then on areas for future action.

Mr. President,

The 2009 Annual Ministerial Review focused on global public health. The review gave major political impetus to the implementation of the global public health goals and helped in placing the issue of health at the centre of the development agenda.

By promoting consensus on issues ranging from non-communicable and communicable diseases, neglected tropical diseases, health systems, and health literacy, to intellectual property rights, climate change and health to financing, the Ministerial Declaration opened new vistas for collaborative actions, new partnerships and engagement of new and diverse stakeholders.

The national voluntary presentations by Bolivia, China, Jamaica, Japan, Mali, Sri Lanka and Sudan demonstrated the added value of ECOSOC serving as a platform to engage the global community in exchanging critical lessons learned in MDG implementation.

The AMR review attracted a diverse range of actors from governments, civil society, and private sector and built the political momentum for collective action to advance the global health agenda. This is a strong rallying point and we need to utilize this potential.

Many other outcomes of the Council's work this year are of key relevance to the work of this Assembly.

The Special High-level Meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD, by bringing together all concerned parties, offered a first opportunity to have an inclusive exchange of view on the global financial and economic crisis. It highlighted the need to address the crisis in a coherent and coordinated manner and the urgency to deal with its human impact in order to prevent the crisis from becoming a large-scale human tragedy. The summary record of the discussions was transmitted to the President of the General Assembly for preparation of the draft final document of the International Conference on the World Economic and Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Development.

Another issue the Council considered at its Special High-level Meeting with the international financial and trade institutions, and throughout part of the year, closely linked to the question of an effective response to the crisis, is the need to ensure follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development and the commitments made therein.

In line with the mandate given to ECOSOC by Heads of State and Government at the Doha Conference and reiterated at the International Conference on the World Economic and Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Development, the Council made recommendations to the General Assembly for strengthening and ensuring a more effective and inclusive intergovernmental process to carry out the financing for development follow-up.

Key recommendations made concern notably the Special High-level Spring Meeting of ECOSOC with the international financial and trade institutions, suggesting to hold the meeting at least 5 weeks earlier than currently foreseen and this for up to two days, the allotment of up to two full days of the Council's annual Substantive session to Financing for Development, and more preeminence to the Assembly's consideration of this issue.

Several other mandates were entrusted to ECOSOC by the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, held in New York last June, which it intends to fully implement. The Council requested me to conduct open-ended informal consultations on the matter, which are currently underway. I hope that we will be able to make recommendations to the Assembly in a not too distant future.

I would finally like to stress in this context, the recognition by the Council of the ILO Initiative called "Recovering from the Crisis: A Global Jobs Pact" and the request made to the Secretary-General to report on the follow-up and implementation of the Global Jobs Pact by all relevant actors at the 2010 ECOSOC session.

Mr. President,

At the Substantive session of ECOSOC, Member States recognized and encouraged the ongoing strengthening of humanitarian coordination, with references to the role of the ERC, RC/HC strengthening, gender mainstreaming and strengthened needs assessments, while reinforcing the need for humanitarian actors and donors to strengthen coordination with national governments.

The Council furthermore successfully reviewed the implementation of the guidance of the Assembly on operational activities. The concrete outcomes attested to the continued strong commitment of Member States to the 2007 General Assembly Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR). Some of the Council's recommendations also echoed the broad consensus existing in regard to the General Assembly system-wide coherence process, and enriched its informal consultations particularly on governance and funding of UN operational activities.

While looking at UN operational activities, the Council will not lose sight of the global dynamics of development cooperation. The Development Cooperation Forum is now widely recognized as the focal point within the UN system for holistic consideration of development cooperation issues. I would like to mention in this context the first high-level symposium on "Accountable and transparent development cooperation: towards a more inclusive framework", which will be hosted on 12 and 13 November, 2009 by the Government of Austria. For the 2010 DCF to be able to advance the global dialogue on this important issue, it is important that Member States and other stakeholders actively participate in the upcoming preparatory process.

I am pleased that our efforts to strengthen the interaction and the institutional links between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission are also bearing fruit. The Council thus called at its Substantive session for enhanced engagement with the PBC, including with its country-specific formations, and on 29 October, the Council and the PBC will hold its first joint event, in partnership with the World Food Programme, to consider the Impact of the Food and Economic Crises in Post-Conflict Countries, at which the Secretary General will also participate. I strongly hope that this relationship will be further strengthened in the years ahead as the Council has undoubtedly a role to play in peacebuilding and post-conflict development. The renewed prorogation of the mandate of the Ad-hoc Advisory Group on Haiti with a view to support the country in regard to its medium and long term development, speaks to this effect.

The high number of countries that have volunteered for making national presentations next year is a testimony to the Council's role as a convener and the forum for mutual accountability. Next year could thus present a great opportunity to further strengthen the NVP as an accountability mechanism that will assist the international community to review and fine tune development policies and delivery towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Through these activities, the Council was able to expand the range of stakeholders that the United Nations can partner with to advance the MDGs. The Special Philanthropy Event, which was held last February, and which was well attended by Member States, the corporate, philanthropic, NGO and academic communities, discussed in particular how philanthropy can contribute to advancing the global public health agenda.

The Council intends to further expand its outreach to the philanthropic community, and another Special Event, focusing this time on gender equality and the empowerment of women, is already being prepared.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My experience as President of ECOSOC has shown me the potential of ECOSOC in generating momentum towards the timely realization of MDGs, in bringing so many diverse constituencies on issues of global import and keeping focus on results.

I urge you to utilize this potential to its fullest to mobilize action for the realization of the great vision embodied in the Millennium Development Goals.

Thank you.