



**Check against delivery**

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Hamidon Ali  
President of ECOSO C**

**Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Functional  
Commissions with the Bureau of ECOSOC**

**29 January 2010**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is for me a great pleasure to welcome you to today's meeting, and to thank in particular those Chairpersons that have made the long journey from abroad to be present here today.

Last July's substantive session of the Council helped to break new ground in the area of global public health, with consideration of innovative ways to advance the achievement of MDGs 4, 5 and 6, all pivotal to the achievement of the United Nations Development Agenda. The Council was successful in promoting consensus on issues ranging from non-communicable diseases, neglected tropical diseases, health systems, health literacy, e-health and issues relating to health financing, and more. The adoption of the Council's Ministerial Declaration will provide a major political impetus to the implementation of the global public health goals.

This year's Annual Ministerial Review will consider gender equality and women's empowerment, critical areas of focus for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. A record fourteen countries, both developing and developed, have volunteered to make National Voluntary Presentations and will report on their progress in implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Preparations for the AMR are now well underway; the Council will hold, on 22 February, a special event to consider ways to engage the philanthropic community in working towards the achievement of the gender-related goals, and a global AMR preparatory meeting will take place in mid-April. In addition, regional meetings will be held over the course of the next two months on gender-related topics especially relevant to the specific region, as well as a number of national workshops in support of developing countries making national voluntary presentations.

I am convinced that there is ample scope for valuable contributions to be made by the Council's subsidiary bodies to the AMR, including to its preparatory process, and I believe our meeting today provides an excellent opportunity to discuss ways in which ECOSOC could effectively draw on the expertise that is available from its functional commissions and expert bodies. To that end, the Council Bureau looks forward to hearing your views today on how each of you can contribute to the AMR theme on gender equality and women's empowerment to be considered this summer.

In addition, and as you know, a special three-day MDG Summit will be held in September in order to give a "final push" to the MDGs, many of which are far off-track to meet their 2015 target, and to map out a five year strategy to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the goals. It is especially important for our collective contributions to be fed into this Summit, and it is therefore vital that contributions from the perspective of each of your mandates on the theme of this year's AMR be channeled through the AMR to the 2010 Summit.

I would also like to suggest that there is a need to better align the work programmes and priorities of the functional commissions in a more systematic and balanced way to the core priority areas as contained in the UN Development Agenda. I am hopeful that if this is achieved, commissions will be much better placed in building stronger linkages among themselves and reinforce their valuable contributions to the work of the Council. Strengthening functional coherence through more practical working methods is indeed a challenge we continue to face as we strive for stronger policy coordination within the United Nations development system. To that end, the Council would welcome suggestions from the functional commissions on suggestions on how the Council could improve its own methods of work.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our meeting today presents us with an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas on possible measures that could be undertaken to enhance contributions to ECOSOC's work, in particular, to its AMR and DCF. To help stimulate an interactive and meaningful discussion this morning, I would like to propose that we focus on some key issues and challenges facing us in our efforts to bring more cohesion to our work. These include:

- *What are some of the concrete ways in which the functional commissions and expert bodies can collaborate in supporting this year's AMR theme on gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as the MDG Summit next September?*

- *More broadly speaking, how can the AMR and DCF be better supported by the work of the functional commissions? What specific measures could be taken to strengthen that support?*

- *Looking ahead, how can the Council and its subsidiary bodies operate as a unified system around the single framework of the internationally agreed development goals in order to drive and review their implementation?*

- *What suggestions could be made from the viewpoint of the functional commissions with regard to strengthening the vertical linkages between the commissions and the Council, including for example, the format and procedures of its General segment, including consideration of the commission reports?*

These are some of the important questions we must address today. I am hopeful that today's discussion will show that this sort of interaction can be of tremendous benefit to us as we strive towards the common goal of helping to advance the UN's Development Agenda.

\*\*\*\*