

**ADDRESS TO THE FORTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

by

**THE PRESIDENT OF ECOSOC:
AMBASSADOR SYLVIE LUCAS OF LUXEMBOURG**

2 April 2009
Agenda Item 6

Madame Chair,
Distinguished delegates,

It is an honour for me to address the 42nd session of the Commission on Population and Development in my capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council. I would like to assure you of the full support of ECOSOC for the efforts of the Commission to advance the global agenda on population and development, particularly as they relate to this year's Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), which will focus on "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health."

Mandated by Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit, the AMR main purposes are to assess progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the other goals and targets agreed to at the major UN conferences and summits held since 1990, and to contribute to scaling-up and accelerating action to realize that Development Agenda, by serving as a global high-level forum with broad-based participation, where lessons learned can be exchanged and successful practices and approaches that merit scaling-up can be identified.

The AMR was successfully launched in 2007, when it focused on the eradication of poverty and hunger. In 2008, the AMR discussed sustainable development and, as I pointed out earlier, this year it will focus on public health. The Annual Ministerial Review will take place in Geneva during the High-level Segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, scheduled to take place from 6 to 9 July.

To ensure that the AMR meets its objectives, preparations at the global, regional and national levels are under way. The AMR has been successful in generating strong engagement by Member States, the United Nations system, other major institutional stakeholders, and civil society, including the private sector. This year's theme of improving global public health has generated much attention, also given the possible consequences of the economic and financial crisis that the world is undergoing, and the Commission may wish to take note of a number of preparatory activities that have already taken place or are occurring in the next few months.

Just two days ago, members of the Commission had the opportunity to participate in one of the global preparatory meetings, which considered e.a. the effects of the financial crisis on the achievement of the health goals. In addition, regional meetings are allowing Member States to focus on issues that are pertinent to each region. The first took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and focused on "*Financing strategies for health care*". The next upcoming AMR regional meeting will be held at the end of April in Beijing, China. It will focus on "*Promoting Health Literacy*". The proposed AMR regional meeting in Qatar is expected to focus on "*Preventing and Controlling Non-Communicable Diseases*", an issue which many experts today see as the major health challenge to global development in the 21st century. Finally, regional AMR meetings in Jamaica and in Ghana, considering issues related to *HIV/AIDS* and *e-health*, are under discussion.

Under the guidance of the Bureau of ECOSOC, further events and meetings are being held in preparation for the AMR. For instance, earlier this year a special event on *Philanthropy and the Global Health Agenda* was organized jointly by DESA and the United Nations Office for Partnerships, in collaboration with the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy and the World Health Organization. In addition, an ECOSOC Panel Discussion on Traditional Medicine entitled *Using traditional medicine to accelerate progress in achieving the health-related MDGs* was convened on 12 February in New York.

Lastly, an internet forum in the form of a moderated e-discussion on *Global Public Health* took place between 29 January and 26 February 2009 and was organized jointly by DESA and UNDP. This forum, in addition to providing access to a variety of actors, was successful in generating a number of actionable recommendations for consideration of the Council and the international community.

The Annual Ministerial Review session as such centres around a series of *National Voluntary Presentations* made by both developing and developed countries on progress made in implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. This year Bolivia, China, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Japan, Mali, Sri Lanka and Sudan have volunteered to make those presentations.

The National Voluntary Presentations aim to provide examples of best practices and lessons learned so that other Member States may base their initiatives on what works. To assist Member States in this regard, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has developed a website entitled “*Development Strategies that Work*” where the findings emanating from the AMR are posted.

Also, at the request of the developing countries making National Voluntary Presentations, DESA has assisted in the organization of national workshops to strengthen capacity for assessing implementation of national development strategies. So far, workshops have been held in Bolivia, China, Mali and Sri Lanka. All workshops involved the participation of major stakeholders and focused on health priorities.

Distinguished delegates,

While the activities that I have enumerated are crucial to the success of the AMR, they can only generate some of the ideas and recommendations that need to be considered and pursued. The functional commissions are another important source of input to assess progress made, identify obstacles to the attainment of the health goals and devise effective strategies to achieve those goals. The Council is confident that the Commission on Population and Development, in particular, will provide intergovernmental leadership in areas of its competence, including sexual and reproductive health, the prevention of child mortality, the improvement of maternal health and the interrelations of population dynamics, including population ageing, and public health. I look forward to your views on these and other relevant issues.

To conclude, let me thank the Chair of the Commission, Ms. Elena Zúñiga Herrera, for inviting me to address this session of the Commission and let me stress that I value the commitment of you all, colleagues and members of the Commission, to engage actively in the work of the Council.

Thank you.