

**United Nations Economic and Social Council  
Coordination and Management Meetings**

**Commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development**

**United Nations, ECOSOC Chamber  
8 June, 2015, 10:30 am – 1:00 pm**

**I. Introduction**

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will convene its Coordination and Management Meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from June 8 - 10th 2015. The Council decided to dedicate the morning of June 8th 2015 for the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Summit.

The General Assembly in its resolution (69/143, para 64) invites the ECOSOC to give appropriate consideration to the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development by organizing this year a meeting during the regular programme of work of the substantive session of the Council. It should take into account ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and the fact that a summit at the level of Heads of State and Government for its adoption will be held this September.

**II. Background**

**Overview of the World Summit for Social Development**

Following an initiative by the Government of Chile, approved by the General Assembly, and two years of work by the Preparatory Committee, chaired by Ambassador Juan Somavía of Chile, the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) was held in Copenhagen under the auspices of the Government of Denmark from 6 – 12 March 1995. At the Summit, Member States of the United Nations adopted the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, which is one of the most comprehensive action plans for achieving social development to date. The agreement set an ambitious people-centred agenda aimed at promoting social progress, justice and the betterment of the human condition, based on full participation by all.

The World Summit for Social Development provided the first opportunity for the world community to focus its attention at the highest political level on the nature and roots of social problems and trends. The Copenhagen Declaration represented a unique consensus on three key social development objectives: eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment and fostering social integration, and to take a holistic approach to achieve them.

Acknowledging sustainability as the overarching development framework, the Declaration clearly stated that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. The outcome of the Summit was built on a recognition that social development could not be pursued as a separate sector nor could it be pursued as piecemeal initiatives but required an orientation of values, objectives and priorities towards the well-being of all. It aspired to “place people at the centre of development and direct our economies to meet human needs more effectively.”

*“We are deeply convinced that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Equitable social development that recognizes empowering the poor to*

*utilize environmental resources sustainably is a necessary foundation for sustainable development. We also recognize that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice.*

*We recognize, therefore, that social development is central to the needs and aspirations of people throughout the world and to the responsibilities of Governments and all sectors of civil society. ...”*

The Summit influenced the outcomes of many development conferences that followed, including the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals that aimed to express it. Yet, some broader commitments of Copenhagen remain unfulfilled and others have progressed unevenly at best. This year, when Heads of State and Government are expected to adopt the post-2015 development agenda in September and given the growing inequality and environmental degradation, and intensifying negative impacts of climate change, the overall policy analysis and commitments of the Social Summit remain fully relevant.

[Outcome Document of the World Summit for Social Development](#)

[The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action](#)

### **III. Commemorating Copenhagen**

The 20th anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development comes at a critical time in the international community. During the 53rd session of the Commission for Social Development (Feb. 2015), Member States acknowledged that progress towards fulfilling Copenhagen commitments has been uneven, and the vision and three major objectives adopted at the summit – eradicating poverty, promoting productive employment and decent work and fostering social integration - remain acutely relevant today. The post-2015 development agenda is expected to be adopted at the United Nations Summit in September 2015. The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development will take place from 26 June to 8 July under the theme of "Strengthening integration, implementation and review - the HLPF after 2015".

The post-2015 development agenda is expected to be a universal, transformative and people-centred agenda which will require addressing inter-linkages among social, economic and environmental dimensions. Policy coherence and integrated approach to follow-up and impact assessment is considered critical to create positive synergies and manage potential conflicts among the three dimensions. To achieve inclusive growth and reduce environmental degradation, social policies to address poverty, unemployment, exclusion, and inequality in its all dimensions, will have to be strengthened and further integrated into economic and environmental policies.

It is a high time to commemorate the Social Summit to renew the commitments made at the Summit, as well as emphasize the central role social policy and development can play to achieve not only social but also economic and environmental objectives. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the Economic and Social Council will dedicate a session of the Coordination and Management Meeting, which will consist of two parts. The first part, under the theme of “The political meaning of the World Social Summit in the contemporary world”, will have statements of reflection from key UN officials and key players of the World Social Summit held in Denmark. The second part will be an interactive panel under the theme of “Impact of the World Social Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post 2015 Development agenda”.