

9 July 2008

**2008 ECOSOC Substantive Session
Coordination Segment**

**“The role of the United Nations system in implementing the Ministerial Declaration
of the high-level segment of the 2007 substantive session of the Economic and Social
Council”**

**New York, 9 July 2008
12:30-1:00 pm**

**Closing remarks by
H.E. Mr. Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima
Vice-President of ECOSOC**

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now concluded the formal work of the coordination segment. This is been a very interesting session that has dealt with a number of important issues and challenges affecting the efforts of the UN system to support the eradication of poverty and hunger in developing countries.

I would like to highlight some of the major points that have emerged from the session, especially from the rich panel discussions.

We heard about the UN system efforts to promote food security in the context of the global food crisis. A clear consensus has emerged on the need to rethink current strategies and policies. The imperative is to act now and together in ways that make short term interventions fully compatible with longer term strategies. New approaches need to embrace the various dimensions of the problem which has multiple causes and multiple social, economic and environmental consequences on most countries.

The approach being developed and promoted by the UN system reflects the complexity of the challenge. It not only emphasizes the need for coordinated action, especially between humanitarian and development interventions, but also the need for a coherent and comprehensive framework for action within the context of sustainable development.

The need to refocus on agriculture and rural development has also emerged as a clear message from the overall debate on the global food crisis. Agricultural development

is essential to poverty eradication and economic growth, but it is not sustainable if it is not accompanied by social development. These two dimensions should go hand in hand. The challenge for the future is to ensure a balanced approach, where social programmes have a major impact on agricultural and rural development and vice versa.

Women empowerment is essential to any effort aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger. Women are an important untapped resource for social and economic growth in the majority of developing countries. Empowering women ensures rapid progress towards the achievement of the MDGs and other development goals. Discussions on this issue during this session have highlighted the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women. They have also highlighted the biggest obstacles to achieving these goals, which is violence against women. There is no question that this is not only a dis-humanizing practice that should be eliminated in its own right, but also a major issue for the achievement of MDG1.

We also focused on rural employment. The ECOSOC and its subsidiary machinery had a prominent role in promoting the goal of full employment and decent role and in placing this objective at the centre of any effort to eradicate poverty and hunger and in making this objective an integral part of the UN system strategy in this regard. The discussion in the coordination segment has emphasized the critical role of rural employment and has highlighted the work being done at the policy level within ECOSOC. It has also emphasized the need to ensure that this work translates into action through the programmes and operations of the UN system at the country level.

The ECOSOC has again an important role to play in this regard, by providing a platform for the normative and operational agencies of the UN system to find ways to harmonize their work.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our discussions during this segment, I hope, have contributed towards a better understanding of the complexities involved in the eradication of poverty and hunger and the need for a coordinated and concerted approach by the UN system in supporting countries efforts to achieve the MDGs in a timely fashion.

While we have concluded the discussion, work on the two draft resolutions continues. I urge all of you to complete the work on these resolutions at the earliest.

Thank you.