

Informal Summary
General Debate for the Coordination Segment
2008 Economic and Social Council

UNHQ, New York, 8 July 2008

H.E. Mr. Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, in his opening remarks stated that 2007 Ministerial Declaration, “Strengthening the efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development,” is an important step towards implementation of MDG1 as well as the UN development agenda. The coordination segment provides an opportunity to assess the UN system’s role across a broad range of policy areas that impact this goal and to offer guidance on strengthening the system’s approach to supporting the efforts for the eradication of poverty and hunger.

Implementing the comprehensive UN development agenda requires promoting a greater convergence of efforts to increase synergies and complementarities among the activities of all relevant actors. While Mr. Lima said the UN has made progress in advancing system-wide coordination at the substantive and operational levels, there is a need to develop a more comprehensive policy framework to guide the follow-up activities. The coordination segment presents the Council with an opportunity to promote collaboration and synergy in the on-going policy work of its subsidiary bodies and to identify ways to strengthen the link between the normative work of its functional commissions and the operational work of the UN agencies.

The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Council

Key messages:

- There is a need for a coordinated and coherent response by the UN system to address the range of multi-dimensional challenges confronting the international community in the eradication of poverty and hunger, particularly at the country level.
- Many called for the Council to give top priority to the eradication of poverty and hunger, placing it at the center of operations within the UN system, including the allocation of resources to reflect this priority. There was also a call for the international community to redouble efforts to fight poverty and hunger, at the national and international levels.
- Efforts by the UN system to improve its coordination, particularly through the Chief Executives Board (CEB), were welcomed, but the need to further strengthen this mechanism was repeatedly emphasized. The Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) should guide system-wide coordination activities.

- Various efforts by the UN system to respond to the crises and promote the attainment of the MDGs were welcomed. Support was expressed for the twin-track approach of short-term interventions and longer-term programmes to respond to the food crisis.

Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the theme of the 2008 coordination segment on the follow-up to the 2007 Ministerial Declaration. The report highlighted some successful actions taken by the UN system towards the eradication of poverty and hunger, including in the areas of rural and agricultural development, the global food crisis, full employment and decent work, and trade. Yet, more efforts are needed to integrate important dimensions such as sustainable development, science and technology, and financing for development in the UN system's approach to supporting the eradication of poverty and hunger.

In the ensuing general debate, delegations expressed appreciation for the Secretary-General's report. States underscored the need for a coordinated and more coherent response -- particularly at the country level -- by the UN system to address the range of challenges confronting the international community, especially poverty and hunger, which have been exacerbated by a number of crises. It was emphasized that the multi-dimensional nature of MDG1 requires a more comprehensive approach, and **the United States** cautioned against seeking too-simplistic solutions to the challenges. Several speakers supported the report's recommendation for strengthening national capacity. Some called for special emphasis on Africa to help the continent meet the first goal.

Despite overall advances towards MDG1, inequalities remain and the increase in food and energy price could jeopardize progress. Various efforts by the UN system to respond to the crises and promote the attainment of the MDGs were welcomed. Support was expressed for the twin-track approach of short-term interventions and longer-term programmes to respond to the food crisis. **Indonesia** suggested that the Council could contribute to following up and monitoring the effectiveness of policy options for addressing the food crisis.

The European Union (EU) urged the Council to give top priority to the eradication of poverty and hunger, placing it at the center of operations within the UN system, and called on the international community to redouble efforts to fight poverty and hunger, at the national and international levels, within the framework of the multi-stakeholder global partnership for development. The EU also stressed the need for actions and policies aimed at stimulating global, inclusive, economic growth, as well as improved efforts to address cross-cutting issues. **The G77 and China** urged the Council to ensure that the funds, programmes and specialized agencies give top priority to the eradication of poverty and hunger in their thematic focus areas, including the allocation of resources to reflect this priority. The Group also stressed that it is the responsibility of all countries to promote policies consistent and coherent with the commitments made at the major UN summit and conferences in order to make progress towards development goals, including the eradication of poverty and hunger. In this regard, the Group called upon developed countries to take urgent actions to correct the distorting impact that their trade, energy

and financial policies and unsustainable consumption and production patterns have on the prospects of developing countries to achieve the MDGs.

The African Group called on the UN system to support the implementation of the declaration of the recent African Union Summit on agricultural development, which called for a global partnership to address the food crisis and the launch of an international high-level dialogue between food exporters and importers from developing and developed countries.

Some countries called for the fulfillment of all commitments to developing countries in order to contribute to reducing poverty and hunger, and **China** also asked the UN to increase its financial and technical support. However, **the United States** emphasized aid effectiveness over absolute quantity of aid.

Belarus underscored the importance of trade liberalization to increasing growth and reducing poverty and called for a successful conclusion to the Doha Round of trade negotiations.

Many countries recognized efforts by the UN system to improve its coordination, particularly through the Chief Executives Board (CEB). **The G77** asked the CEB to enhance its interaction with the ECOSOC through the Coordination Segment. **The African Group** stated that the UN system needs to proactively address emerging challenges, and must, therefore, make progress in coordinating early, collective responses, at both the normative and operational levels. **Switzerland** saw the CEB High-level Committee on Programmes and the Committee for Development Policy as potentially playing important roles in enabling the UN system to anticipate global problems. **Indonesia** specifically asked for an integrated early warning system to monitor the status of global food security. **The G77** furthermore emphasized that system-wide coordination activities should be guided by the TCPR. **The US** and **EU** stated the need for multilateral organizations to focus on their core missions and avoid redundant work.

The EU echoed the report's conclusion that all UN organizations must make more efficient use of existing frameworks and increase awareness of the different aspects of the fight against poverty and hunger. **Switzerland** encouraged translating the initiatives and actions outlined in the report into concerted and coordinated actions at the country level that are integrated in UNDAFs. **Malaysia** stated that the UN should do more to promote science and technology as a means of achieving the IADGs, including by establishing a framework for facilitating the transfer of technology and promoting developing countries as producers and not only consumers of technology. **Russia** and **Congo** also supported further leveraging science and technology to meet the development goals.

Indonesia called for concrete efforts to strengthen and better mainstream the agriculture sector into national development strategies, through a wide range of policies, including increasing agricultural productivity, developing rural infrastructure, and enacting national distribution and trade policies conducive to giving local farmers access to domestic markets. **Nigeria** also underscored the importance of increased agricultural production

and infrastructure development to the eradication of poverty and hunger, and called for more inclusive international trade, foreign investment, transfer of renewable technologies and equitable disbursement of climate change adaptation funds to enhance sustainable development and achievement of the MDGs. **Belarus** also emphasized the importance of energy conservation and transfer of environmentally sound energy technologies. To address the challenges of urbanization, **Switzerland** urged for an integrated approach to territorial development that combines social, environmental and economic policies.

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major UN conferences and summits

Key messages:

- The Economic and Social Council has an important role in leading the system-wide coordination of UN action in the economic and social fields, and should give clear and strong guidance to its subsidiary bodies to implement measures for promoting coordination within their respective mandates and areas of competence.
- A coordinated response to development needs should be set in the context of the new and emerging challenges to development, such as the global food crisis, which will negatively impact progress on poverty and hunger as well as on other internationally agreed development goals. The UN must make more progress in coordinating early, collective responses, at both the normative and operational levels.

Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major UN conferences and summits (E/2008/77). The report stresses that the different goals and targets agreed at these events can be achieved only if they are pursued in an integrated manner, as part of the comprehensive UN development agenda.

Throughout the process of integrated and coordinated follow-up, the ECOSOC has played a central role. It was equipped by the 2005 World Summit with a new, powerful tool for translating the integrated and coordinated approach into substantive reviews of the implementation – the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR). The AMR has strengthened substantive integration and the ECOSOC system's ability to work in a more coordinated fashion.

The report highlights the progress made on the conference follow-up as it relates to the 2008 AMR theme. It also addresses the institutional aspects of the follow-up processes and how to promote policy coherence and strengthen the link between normative and operational work of the UN system. Among other things, the report recommended that the Council consider triennializing the report on integrated and coordinated follow-up, since the integrated substantive review is now being pursued through the AMR process. This would provide a reasonable time period before the next overall review of the integrated conference follow-up.

During the general debate, delegations welcomed the Secretary-General's report and its recommendations. **The G77 and China** saw this as an opportune time to focus on a coordinated response of the UN on a system-wide basis, considering the range of multidimensional challenges confronting the international community, as well as the competition for resources and the current General Assembly discussions on system-wide coherence. A number of delegations indicated that the discussion on a coordinated response to development needs and priorities should be viewed in the context of the new and emerging challenges to development, such as the global food crisis, which will negatively impact developing countries' progress to reduce poverty and hunger as well as their abilities to achieve the other IADGs. **The EU** expressed concern that progress towards sustainable development is lagging, and urged members to accept ambitious commitments during the current cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Many interventions underscored the importance of ECOSOC in guiding the system-wide coordination of UN activities in the economic and social fields, while at the same time collaborating with other international organizations and regional organizations like NEPAD. **The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent** underscored the importance of partnering at the national level with community-based organizations. **The G77** said that ECOSOC should give clear, direct and strong guidance to its subsidiary bodies to implement measures for promoting coordination within their respective mandates and areas of competence, and called on the funds, programmes and specialized agencies to ensure that policy guidance from the Council is integrated into the programme of work and operational activities for development. **Switzerland** welcomed the AMR's multi-year work programme, but favours a longer-term perspective, and supports the triennialization of the integrated conference follow-up report.

Many delegations emphasized that, while each country is responsible for its own development, these efforts must be supplemented by the global partnership for development if we are to meet the international agreed development targets. Some states reiterated that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and **the EU** stressed the importance of the recommendation to analyze the situation in partner countries so that the system can respond appropriately to the needs of each country. **The African Group** called for the strengthening of the UNDAF to streamline the activities of the UN system to respond to countries' development needs and strengthen national ownership. A few interventions expressed support for continuing efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the system through the UN's Delivering as One initiative.