

2009 ECOSOC coordination segment- Panel III

“Towards a UN comprehensive response to the challenges of climate change”

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**Chairman,
Honourable Participants,
Ladies, Gentlemen!**

I would like to begin by thanking you for the opportunity to speak at this panel, whose topic is of high importance. Since the convening of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, the Commission for Social Development has been the key UN body in charge of the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

The Copenhagen Declaration includes commitments like:

1. Create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development;
2. Eradicate absolute poverty by a target date to be set by each country;
3. Support full employment as a basic policy goal;
4. Promote social integration based on the enhancement and protection of all human rights;
5. Achieve equality and equity between women and men;
6. Attain universal and equitable access to education and primary health care;
7. Accelerate the development of Africa and the least developed countries;
8. Ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals;
9. Increase resources allocated to social development;
10. Strengthen cooperation for social development through the UN.

The Commission for Social Development priority theme for the biennium 2009-2010 review and policy cycle is "Social integration".

There is a challenge of two different crises now in our world. It is “a testing time” of our ability to cooperate on global level.

1. Climate change may be the defining social justice issue of our generation. Climate change produces complex social responses and may magnify migration, conflicts, crime and violence in to catastrophic measures. However, while it is increasingly certain on what will happen to earth’s climate, the knowledge on the likely social consequences of climate change for human society is still mostly unknown.
2. The origins of the global jobs crisis lie in the weak governance and inadequate regulation of the finance markets. Millions of women and men have lost their jobs. The effects of the crisis are hitting developing countries hard.

We must do better. We must invest in sustainable green economy.

Crisis and climate change

The global financial and economic crisis as well as climate change, pose a serious threat to hard-earned advances made in social development in recent years.

Ageing of population is just time limited prolongation of an average age, thanks to human development. This is not real crisis. Global financial crisis is a problem. Climate change is a big crisis. Both are results of human mismanagement.

Climate change undoubtedly threatens many existing jobs, and offers new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Climate change generated employment, could be directed to the most vulnerable populations who will be disproportionately affected: women, youth, those living in poverty and migrants.

A recent report prepared under the Green Jobs Initiative of the UNEP, the ILO, the International Organisation of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation; and recent UNDESA policy brief A Global Green New Deal for Sustainable Development is good starting point.

Response

Our response should contribute to a fair globalization, a greener economy and development that more effectively creates jobs and sustainable enterprises, respects workers' rights, promotes gender equality, protects vulnerable people, assists countries in the provision of quality public services and enables countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Eradication of poverty in developing countries and tackling climate change are firmly linked. The MDGs will not be achieved if climate change and environmental degradation are not tackled.

Mitigating the impact of the crises on social development will require creating short- and long-term policies that are comprehensive and consistent, while recognizing that social, economic and environmental policies must be coordinated and must complement each other.

Concrete policy measures to counter the impact of current global crises may include (CsocD 2009 E/CN.5/2009/CRP.2):

Immediate short-term measures:

- The implementation of large-scale internationally coordinated fiscal stimulus packages that are mutually reinforcing and consistent with sustainable development goals will be the key to counteracting the social consequences of the present crisis.
- Strengthened national and international political commitment to integrated economic and social policies for social development in times of crises to take immediate measures to protect the well-being of the poor and the disadvantaged.

In medium- to long-term measures we have to:

- Ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated into all policy responses to address climate change.

- Explore the possibility of using the opportunity and political momentum generated by the crises to initiate and adopt a new green and social compact to ensure sufficient levels of public spending on health and education towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Youth

As a Vice-Chair of the Commission for Social Development, which is charged with the follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth I need to repeat the that climate change is challenging social justice not only of my generation.

We need to capture environmental enthusiasm of young (new) generation and give them the skills and opportunities to make a difference. It is young people that are most likely to change their behaviour, to influence their families, and to take personal action. And, it is the behaviour that people adopt during their youth which is most likely to carry on in the future. Tapping into young people's green conscience may also be useful from an employment perspective. With the right training, young people will be able to find employment in the rapidly growing green jobs sector and can thereby combine their desire to help the planet with securing a stable future for themselves.

Questions

1. How will people's lives change as a result of climate change?
2. What policies should be put in place to help people cope?
3. What can UN do and what must UN do?

The UN system could contribute in:

- Assisting countries in socio-economic cost-benefit analysis, the climate-proofing of investments, and spatial planning;
- Strengthening national capacities to improve integrated policy with respect to the climate changes;
- Collect, systematize, analyze and disseminate good practices and knowledge;
- Enhance regional cooperation on adaptation.