

Statement by the Mr. Zahid Rastam (Malaysia) at the Coordination Segment
of the 2009 Substantive Session of ECOSOC,
Geneva, 13 July 2009

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President,

I would first like to thank the Secretariat for their report and presentation, as well as to associate my delegation with the statement made by Sudan on behalf of the G77 and China.

2. Our goal in this segment is to evaluate the role played by the United Nations in implementing last year's ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration, which focused on 'Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development'.
3. It is clear from the report of the Secretary General (E/2009/56) that the UN's record in this regard has been mixed. This mirrors the mixed record of the international community as a whole. This has occurred despite all of the commitments made, plans formulated as well as structures and mechanisms established. On this issue, as in many others, there is a chasm between intention and implementation.
4. We believe that this situation is the result of many factors, some of them mentioned in the report. At the conceptual level, there are now far too many competing comprehensive development frameworks based on various elements such as sustainable development, gender and human rights, although the last has not met with agreement amongst members of the UN. While the aims of these comprehensive frameworks may not be mutually exclusive, they nonetheless result in the diffusion of focus, given that progress is measured in different ways. After all, the results matrix of progress in sustainable development is different from that of gender empowerment. This has occurred despite glib statements that these elements are mutually reinforcing. It is not surprising that the record of meeting the goals related to any of these has been uninspiring. We firmly believe therefore, that rather than having many comprehensive frameworks based on different elements, we should have one comprehensive framework including these different elements.
5. There are also political reasons why progress has not been as rapid as hoped for. Issues such as sustainable development, which involves a long-term time horizon, often fall prey to the immediate needs and pressures. Governments of democratic societies often work and think of much shorter, typically in cycles of four to five years, when elections occur.

Mr. Vice-President,

6. We would like to offer the following comments on the specific issues raised in the report:

- 6.1 One: We would prefer the use of the term 'Delivering as One' rather than 'One United Nations', given that the latter implies the integration of the many components of the UN system. Even then, we believe that in the context of the system-wide coherence discussions, even the term 'Delivering as One' confuses more than it clarifies;
- 6.2 Two: In the sub-section on 'affordable, cost-effective and efficient energy supply', we would have liked more details on the barriers limiting the contribution of alternative sources for meeting countries' energy demands. We note that in the sub-section on 'sustainable urbanisation', the report did identify the constraints standing in the way of sustainable urbanization; and
- 6.3 Three: Given that 82 countries have reported that they are implementing a sustainable development strategy, the report should have covered more fully the lessons learnt from these strategies.

Mr. Vice-President,

7. We continue to believe that the ECOSOC has a critical coordination role to play. Having said that, this is an area in which there is much room for improvement. More meaningful interface between the Chief Executives' Board (CEB) and ECOSOC is one way to do this. However, at a more fundamental level, we note that perfect synchronicity between the ECOSOC and the CEB will not be achieved as the members of the CEB ultimately report to their own governing bodies, and not the ECOSOC. However, we will comment more fully on the interaction between the CEB and ECOSOC when we discuss item 7 of our agenda.

Thank you.