

UNITED NATIONS



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2009 ECOSOC SUBSTANTIVE SESSION

Opening of the coordination segment on the theme:

“The role of the United Nations system in implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development”

Geneva, 10 July 2009

3:00-3:15 pm

Introductory remarks by

H.E. MR. SOMDUTH SOBORUN

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to open the 2009 coordination segment.

I would like to thank the Secretariat for providing us with two very useful and analytical reports for this segment: on the role of the UN system in promoting sustainable development, and on the integrated follow-up to major UN conferences and summits, respectively.

First, I would like to say a few words on the theme of this year’s coordination segment. The 2008 Ministerial Declaration – on “Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development” – represents an important step forward towards the implementation of the United Nations sustainable development agenda.

The 2008 Ministerial Declaration stressed that numerous and interrelated challenges threaten the implementation of the globally agreed policy framework for sustainable development. These challenges range from financial instability, to slowing global economic growth, rising food and fuel prices, and the impact of environmental degradation and climate change. Today - in the midst of the global financial and economic crisis – it has become painfully obvious that current growth paths are neither sustainable nor conducive to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.

We have to adopt a new approach that reconciles short-term sectoral policies and objectives with the longer-term goal of sustainable development. This will require a more balanced approach to social, economic and environmental objectives. In particular, the Declaration has called for urgent and concerted action in a number of dimensions relevant to sustainable development such as agriculture, rural development, water management, energy, urbanization, as well as institutional development and social equality.

The UN system has an important role to play in promoting and supporting these dimensions and facilitating their integration into national development strategies. This year's coordination segment gives the Council an opportunity to assess the UN system's role in supporting the efforts of countries to pursue sustainable development.

I look forward to the debate on this issue in the next few days.

As I mentioned earlier, the coordination segment will also focus on the role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits.

The internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, have increasingly forged a shared vision of development. This vision is based on the growing consensus that integrated, holistic approaches to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development are the best to pursue the UN development agenda.

ECOSOC has made important progress in enhancing coherence, coordination and cooperation among the follow-up activities and institutions related to the implementation of the different elements of the UN development agenda. Major challenges, however, remain, as both national governments and UN system organizations entrusted with the implementation of the global conferences continue to operate along sectoral lines.

The new functions of the ECOSOC, the AMR and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), constitute an important step forward towards the development of a more comprehensive policy framework to guide all follow-up activities carried out by various national and UN entities.

The consideration of this agenda item in the coordination segment provides an opportunity for the Council to consider ways to further enhance policy coherence in the integrated follow-up and implementation of global conferences. There is a generally shared hope that the Council will address this issue and consider innovative ways to promote implementation in the broader context of the ECOSOC new functions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When it comes to the UN system-wide coordination, the Chief Executives Boards for Coordination (CEB) has a central role to play. The Report of the CEB will be presented today for consideration by the Council. In addition, four panel discussions

during this segment will also focus on issues of financial crisis, emerging challenges, coordination among inter-governmental bodies of ECOSOC, and country level experiences in developing sustainable development strategies. I urge all of you to actively participate in these discussions.

I would now like to invite Mr. Stelzer to introduce the Secretary-General's report on the theme of the 2009 coordination segment. Mr. Stelzer, you have the floor.