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**Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC)**

**Substantial Session 2009**

**Coordination Segment**

**Agenda Item 4**

**General Debate**

**Statement by**

**H.E. Mr. Olivier Chave**

**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation**

**Geneva, 13 July 2009**

Mrs. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the role of the United Nations in implementing the Ministerial Declaration of the 2008 high-level segment.

The report shows that sustainable development, because of its multiple dimensions and extraordinary complexity, is causing great challenges in terms of coordination not only to the United Nations but to all of our governmental structures. Generally speaking, Switzerland agrees that sustainable development should be one of the fundamental objectives of the United Nation System. Most if not all its activities – would their nature be normative, operational, in research or monitoring, etc. – should contribute to the realization of this objective. The report further shows that much more needs to be done to truly mainstream the concept of sustainable development into all areas of work of the United Nations, including at the operational level.

We took good note of the numerous efforts of the United Nations System to address these challenges. Existing inter-agency coordination mechanisms, such as UN-Energy, UN-Water and UN-Oceans can be commended in this regard. Yet, as an early supporter of UN-Water, Switzerland also had to recognise the limitations of such approaches. In particular, the peer-to-peer nature of the relationship amongst the agencies participating in these thematic networks translates into a lack of common direction and a lack of focus. In our view, this problem can only be solved if the question of leadership is addressed boldly by the UN, notably by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

The CEB is in a unique position to promote sustainable development as a system-wide focus and Switzerland applauds the efforts undertaken by the CEB in this regard. However, the CEB should address much more decidedly the need for strong and clear leadership in the United Nations System joint undertakings and, for instance, appoint a lead agency for every sub-theme of sustainable development.

In our view, each lead agency should be provided with all institutional and financial means necessary to enable this leadership role. Furthermore, the lead agency should be granted an

undisputable cross-system authority within the United Nations System to establish a clear agenda in its field of responsibility. All other agencies would buy into this agenda and its relevant operational elements could be integrated into the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) at country-level. For it is at the country level that a difference can be made for the benefit of the population and that success can be measured.

Let me give you one specific example. We fully agree with the Secretary-General's analysis that "the environmental dimension still remains somewhat separate from the economic and social activities of the system". We thus believe that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should be strengthened as the leading entity within the United Nations System for environmental issues and that it should be tasked with developing a system-wide environmental strategy. This would enable the United Nations System to scale up ongoing efforts such as the partnership between the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme in mainstreaming climate change concerns into national development strategies.

Mrs. President,

Let me finally address the role of ECOSOC in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcome of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. We welcome the Secretariat's intention to make the corresponding report complementary to QCPR (Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review) reporting. We look forward to further discussing this issue with the membership in the upcoming days, as well as to achieving some clarity in relation to the methodologies which could be utilized to establish such a report.

Thank you for your attention.