

Informal Summary

2011 Economic and Social Council High-Level Segment

Keynote address of H.E. Mde. Micheline Calmy-Rey, President of the Swiss Confederation

Monday, 4 July, 2011

In her keynote address, **H.E. Mde. Micheline Calmy-Rey**, President of the Swiss Confederation, emphasized that globalization had created many opportunities but had also brought about many risks of an unprecedented scale, such as poverty, instability of financial markets, climate change, global environmental change, scarcity of natural resources, migration stresses and terrorism. These risks are interconnected and transcend national boundaries, and increase the interdependence between rich and poor countries – at the same time that the gap between them is becoming larger.

Mde. Calmy-Rey stated that this situation requires that States address important questions, including how to respond to the needs of human beings and make development equitable as well as shape the debate on social justice in the 21st century. In defining their policies and priorities, national policymakers must enlarge their perception of the public good to ensure that decisions do not affect other countries negatively. The climate change negotiations have shown that adhering to narrow national visions can lead to disastrous results and perceptions of risk. It is indispensable to change the way of thinking to be able to negotiate rights and responsibilities in terms of global public goods.

Mde. Calmy-Rey underlined that since the Rio Conference, some progress has been made: the Commission of Sustainable Development and ECOSOC have demonstrated their usefulness in the search for an advanced political consensus. Yet, international governance remains fragmented and is not efficient. This is at a time when, more than ever, a political authority is needed that is capable of advancing resolutely the sustainability agenda and responding efficiently to the needs of States, especially those that are developing countries. She stated that an institution was needed to create a new dynamic that will permit the surmounting of the current multiple blockages. And if the international community does not necessarily want to create new institutions, then it will be necessary to fundamentally transform existing ones.

Mde. Calmy-Rey proposed that ECOSOC be transformed into a Sustainable Development Council. She stated that ECOSOC enjoys an exceptional position to treat questions relative to sustainable development at the global level, and its privileged position as an institution logically confers upon it a central role in the management of global sustainability challenges. She proposed that ECOSOC evolve to become an efficient Sustainable Development Council. ECOSOC could meet in smaller committee, and more frequently, to address sustainable development issues. A universal periodic evaluation on global sustainability would also be a useful instrument. Another means for

increasing the efficiency of ECOSOC's actions would be to ask States who are candidates for an ECOSOC seat to make specific commitments before the elections. She cited the model of the Human Rights Council as a relevant one to consider in determining the new modalities for a Sustainable Development Council.

Ms. Calmy-Rey concluded by emphasizing that, in general, it is necessary to create a new dynamic, reinforce governance, and better integrate economic, social and environment policies.