

**STATEMENT**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**BY**

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**ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**NEW YORK, 30 JUNE 2005**

Mr. President,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia<sup>\*</sup>, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Mr. President,

2. Today's meeting is a key occasion for ECOSOC to assess the implementation of the outcomes of the major Conferences and Summits, and the progress made toward the Millennium Development Goals. ECOSOC can make a major contribution in identifying the most critical policy areas that hold the key to the achievement of all the development goals.

3. The European Union is strongly committed to the implementation of the outcomes of the Conferences in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, and in particular to the Millennium Declaration and the achievement of the MDGs. We underline the link between achieving the MDGs and reaffirming and implementing these outcomes, including those set out in the Millennium Declaration and those from Beijing, Copenhagen, Cairo, Istanbul, Monterrey, Vienna, Johannesburg, Rome, as well as Brussels, Almaty and Mauritius.

4. Sustainable development is a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities, in particular for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. An integrated approach is necessary to ensure an integration between economic growth, social development and environmental management as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development. Accordingly, eradicating poverty, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.

## **Challenges**

5. While we welcome the many positive developments and growing resolve to attain the MDGs, we know that progress is too slow and too uneven, and that Africa in particular is not on track to meet any of the MDGs by 2015. Substantive efforts still need to be made in the field of poverty eradication. Health and education systems need to be strengthened and gender equality ensured worldwide. Other challenges concern unemployment and the need to ensure decent jobs, mostly among young people. Furthermore we consider that action on environment sustainability and the Johannesburg commitments will support the

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<sup>\*</sup> Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

achievement of the MDGs. More specifically, it is essential to agree on urgent action to tackle climate change, given that this threatens long term economic development globally, but particularly in developing countries.

6. Progress towards meeting the MDGs varies greatly by goal and by region, so that considerable improvement in mutual performance will be needed to achieve them by 2015. The EU reaffirms the high relevance of each of the MDGs, and the high importance to achieve all the MDGs in each country. In this context we need to take into account the special needs of LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and Africa. African countries in particular need specific support if they are to have a chance to attain the MDGs. We also recognize the challenges that the countries with economies in transition are facing.

7. The EU fully endorses the Secretary General's view that "we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights". Democracy, good governance and human rights are the framework in which the MDGs should be implemented at the national level.

### **The role of ECOSOC**

Mr. President,

8. Let me first underline that in our view ECOSOC should play a central role in the follow-up to and the implementation of the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields and of the achievement of the MDGs. It should provide policy guidance to the UN system on these issues and be an institutional framework for their integrated analysis and mainstreaming. The achievement of the MDGs requires bold action on the operational side. ECOSOC should continue to support the coordination and harmonization among operational agencies as well as humanitarian agencies. Its role in operational coordination and providing guidance for the UN funds and programmes, and in promoting dialogue and partnership should be strengthened, and its agenda and work program streamlined.

9. In this respect, the EU stresses the importance to pursue vigorously the reform of UN funds, programs and specialized agencies and to ensure system-wide coherence. The EU supports the Secretary General's urgent appeal for a more integrated international environmental governance structure, based on existing institutions. The EU favors the proposed establishment of a UN agency for the environment, based on UNEP with a revised and strengthened mandate.

10. With regard to development, the Council could evolve to a high-level development cooperation forum, where global, regional and national strategies and policies for development cooperation can be reviewed.

11. Furthermore the Council needs to respond to emerging policy challenges and build coherence with other organisations.

12. We should also consider how ECOSOC may continue to contribute in the field of post-conflict situations, in particular by ensuring coherence with long-term development objectives.

13. We recall that the functional commissions, when mandated, should continue to have the primary responsibility for the review and assessment of progress made in implementing United Nations conference documents, while taking on a new focus in their methods of work, in line with GA resolution 57/270B. We also underline the need for further strengthening the role of ECOSOC and its functional commissions and related subsidiary bodies in pursuing the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. We encourage the functional commissions to further promote synergies in their work, taking into account the Council's guidance.

14. At the country level, the UN Development Assistance Framework and its Results Matrix should be used as effective tools to assist governments in translating the goals of the UN conferences and summits, as well as the MDGs, into national policies, strategies and programmes and to monitor implementation. We also emphasize the need for strong, concrete support for the system-wide role of the Resident Coordinator in promoting the realization of the development goals in their totality. We need to ensure that the UN, at the country level, operates as a team with a common programme in support of countries' poverty reduction strategies as well as enhanced cooperation with IFIs.

### **Shared responsibilities**

15. The achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, can only be successful if all partners act in concert. Each country is primarily responsible for its own development and should take it into its hands, in particular through overarching and coherent national poverty reduction strategies. As outlined in the Monterrey Consensus a broad and urgent collective effort towards a substantial increase in Official Development Aid is necessary if we want to achieve the MDGs.

16. In this regard, the integral and full implementation of the Monterrey Consensus is crucial. We have made considerable progress on the Monterrey agenda, but we still have a long way to go. Developing countries should strengthen efforts to fulfill their part of the Monterrey commitments by creating an enabling environment with good governance and through optimal domestic resource mobilization. In this regard, the importance of private sector development, including a strong financial sector, has to be stressed. We also stress the need for access to finance for the poor, including through micro-credit and micro-finance. Developed countries have important commitments to fulfill as well, relating to ODA and debt. In addition, all countries should be committed to a successful WTO development round.

### **Official development aid and innovative sources of financing**

Mr. President,

17. Allow me to point out that the EU has consistently deployed major efforts in the field of increased ODA. The European Union is currently providing 55% of global ODA. While reaffirming its determination to reach the 0,39% ODA target in 2006 for ODA volumes contained in the Barcelona commitments, the 25 EU Ministers for development cooperation have recently agreed to go a step further.

18. The EU and its Member States have committed for the first time to a collective target of 0,7% ODA of their Gross National Income (GNI) by 2015, and have agreed to an intermediate target of 0,56% by 2010. This means an additional annual amount of 20 billion Euro devoted to development between 2006 and 2010, and an additional annual commitment of 32 billion Euro over 2004 levels of 35 billion Euro, almost a doubling.

19. In addition to increased levels of ODA, the EU shares the view that, in order to achieve the MDGs, we need innovative financing mechanisms. Several initiatives have been presented in this regard. The EU supported the New York Declaration adopted on September 20th last year.

20. To increase levels of finance for development, the EU is considering innovative sources of financing to provide additional, stable and predictable flows, including the International Finance Facility, international solidarity levees that would be nationally applied and internationally coordinated as well as voluntary sources. The EU welcomes the Secretary General's call for bold action in this area as well as the launch of pilot projects. The EU encourages measures in order to reduce the cost and maximize the impact of remittances.

21. While making efforts on the quantity of aid, the EU stresses the need to improve in parallel its quality. We know that aid works best when it is: harmonised between donors; provided in support of country owned strategies and using national processes; focused on the poorest; untied, delivered in a predictable manner and provided in the context of other policies which support development.

22. The EU welcomes the progress made at the Paris OECD DAC High Level forum in March, and is fully committed to timely implementation and monitoring of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness including the agreement by September of monitorable targets for 2010. In order to allow developing countries to better plan for the use of the expected increases in ODA flows, the EU will develop new, more predictable and less volatile aid mechanisms. The EU hopes that the Paris Declaration, already endorsed by more than 90 states, will be universally implemented.

23. The EU remains committed to finding solutions, in cooperation with International Financial Institutions, to unsustainable debt burdens, and is committed to full implementation of the enhanced HIPC initiative. The EU will continue and enhance efforts to restore and maintain debt sustainability, based on a case by case approach. In

this context, we welcome progress made by the IMF and the World Bank in preparing their debt sustainability framework and the G8's proposal of 10/11 June 2005 to cancel the debt stock of HIPC countries which have reached the completion point. It will be vital to agree on the details of this further multilateral debt relief and to successfully implement it.

24. The EU underlines the importance of ensuring wider policy coherence in the context of the global partnership for development.

## **Trade**

25. Trade is a crucial engine for development. Looking ahead to the 6<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong in December 2005, the EU is strongly committed to ensuring a development friendly, sustainable and ambitious outcome of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) that maximises development gains, taking into account the specific needs of the poorest countries, and thus contributes to the achievement of the MDGs. We call for the provision of immediate duty-free and quota-free access for exports from least developed countries. Furthermore we call for initiatives to assist developing countries and those with economies in transition to strengthen their supply-side capabilities, enhance their competitiveness and diversify their exports. The EU is fully committed in this regard.

## **Africa**

Mr. President,

26. The EU considers the development of Africa a priority and will strengthen its efforts to support African countries to reach the MDGs. The EU will also strengthen its cooperation with the UN and other international partners to that end. We will increase our financial assistance for Sub-Saharan Africa and will provide collectively at least 50% of the agreed increase of ODA resources to the continent. All measures taken as regards policy coherence and quality of aid will be applicable to Sub-Saharan Africa as a priority. The EU is greatly encouraged by institutional developments within Africa and is firmly committed to support the African Union and NEPAD in particular. We welcome the progress that has been achieved in implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism.

27. We also recognize the specific development needs in middle income countries and the EU will continue to address them.

## **HIV/AIDS and Health**

28. The fight against HIV/AIDS is crucial. The epidemic of HIV/AIDS has undergone a development which makes it a global crisis of exceptional size, to which an exceptional solution must be supplied. An integrated approach is necessary, including prevention, treatment, care, support and research. Particular attention has to be given to young people

and to women in this context. The necessary resources should be provided in this fight, in particular through a full funding of the Global Fund.

29. The European Union recently adopted the European Action Plan to Fight Against HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. This programme constitutes the basis of a renewed and concerted action of the EU in all the partner countries, as well as at world level, by means of common activities aiming in particular to promote an integrated approach for the fight against the three diseases, to increase the capacities of the partner countries, to increase the resources and the means available and to support access to treatment, research and the development of new prevention instruments.

30. In this context, the EU also supports the full implementation of the Cairo/ICPD+10 action plan, by ensuring that sexual health and the sexual and reproductive rights constitute an essential element of the prevention of HIV/AIDS. We once again stress our commitment to achieve all the goals and targets of the Cairo Agenda and the importance of full access to reproductive health by 2015 for achieving the MDGs, as reaffirmed by the European Council.

31. Addressing health problems, regardless of source, will require as part of national and sectoral strategies, scaled up investments in health systems, that provide adequate numbers of trained and motivated health workers, the provision of basic drugs, strengthened infrastructure, the elimination of user fees and the ability to monitor and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. Achieving goals for poverty eradication, water, sanitation, hygiene, environment and education will also improve health status and expedite development.

### **Gender equality**

32. While a goal in itself, the EU strongly believes that gender equality and the empowerment of women are essential to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals. It is therefore imperative that a gender perspective is fully mainstreamed into all development policies and programmes and into strategies to achieve the MDGs at the international and national level.

33. We note the important conclusions CSW reached in reviewing the implementation of the Beijing plan of action, and note that more efforts are needed to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls, as well as to unleash their full potential.

### **Sustainable development**

Mr. President,

34. Environmental sustainability is crucial for the next generation and the future of the planet. It is also a crucial element for development. The achievement of MDG7 is indispensable for achieving all of the MDGs. In that regard, we need to make decisive progresses in all aspects, and in particular on climate change, biodiversity and desertification.

35. The EU supports the integration of sustainable development into national and international development programmes and strategies, as well as effective follow-up of the outcomes of CSD13 on action to meet international goals on water, sanitation and human settlements, including through the Millennium Review Summit process.

36. Environmental sustainability underpins the achievement of all MDGs and is crucial for escaping the poverty trap. Setting time bound operational targets at national level. a. for sustainable access to energy, water, sanitation, is crucial. We also stress the importance of negotiations on post-2012 as well as urgent action to stop the alarming decline of biodiversity and to combat desertification.

37. Sustainable forest management (SFM) has an important role to play in the achievement of the goal related to environmental sustainability, but forests also have an important role to play in the achievement of other internationally agreed goals and targets, notably goal number one on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, and the goals and targets related to health, and water and energy supply. The EU believes that it is crucial to agree on setting a limited number of clear objectives and quantifiable forest-related targets to raise political commitment to SFM worldwide. Such goals and targets should be directly linked to existing MDG targets.

Mr. President,

38. To conclude, let me underline that the EU fully assumes its part of the shared responsibility for development. In the spirit of the Monterrey Consensus, we expect from our partners to do the same. We are strongly committed to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs and we are looking at the September Summit as a crucial opportunity for reform and enhanced efforts towards 2015.

Thank you Mr. President