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N e w s f r o m

E C O S O C

Newsletter on the work of the United Nations Economic and Social Council

ECOSOC -- The 54-member Economic and Social Council serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and to the United Nations. It makes or initiates studies and reports; makes recommendations on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters; and promotes respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Subsidiary bodies, commissions and committees of ECOSOC carry out its year-round work. ECOSOC strengthens cooperation within the UN system, coordinates the work of the specialized agencies and consults with non-governmental organizations. A substantive session of the Council is convened annually in July, and supplementary formal meetings as well as informal panels on topical issues are held throughout the year.

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Picture: UN/DPI Photo by Eskinder Debebe

High Level segment preparatory meetings

This year, the High-Level segment of the Economic and Social Council, to be held from 28-30 June in New York, will address: “Resources Mobilization and Enabling Environment for Poverty Eradication in the Context of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010.” In preparation for the event, the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination organized a number of preparatory roundtables in close cooperation with UN bodies including OHRLLS, UNDP, UNCTAD, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the World Bank, the IMF, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNIDO, UNCDF, ILO, UNFPA, ESCAP, ESCWA, ECE, ECLAC UNICEF and WFP.

The first High-Level segment preparatory meeting of the Council was held on 17 February 2004. It provided an opportunity for Member States and representatives of the UN system and civil society to focus on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and reflect on how to further progress towards the MDGs in LDCs.

High Level segment preparatory meetings (continued)

The meeting featured keynote addresses by Mr. Carlos Magariños, Director-General of UNIDO; Mr. Raghuram G. Rajan, Chief Economist of IMF; Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib, Senior Vice-President for Human Development of the World Bank; Mr. Zéphrin Diabre, Associate Administrator of UNDP; and Mr. Carlos Fortin, Deputy-Secretary-General of UNCTAD. The addresses were followed by three lively roundtable discussions on different topics relating to the high-level segment theme.

The second High-Level segment preparatory meeting was held on 17 and 18 March 2004. The Council organized a number of roundtables to hear presentations and reviews by a number of LDCs and their development partners on successes achieved, or problems encountered, on the country level in creating an enabling environment conducive to the mobilization of resources for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

Finally, and as part of the High-Level segment of its substantive session of 2004, the United Nations Economic and Social Council will hold a ministerial-level investment promotion forum for poverty reduction in the Least Developed Countries on 28 June 2004, from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m., at the UN headquarters in New York. The investment promotion forum will bring together Ministers and other high-level representatives from LDCs and donor countries, heads of UN agencies and representatives of the business sector and civil society to discuss how to mobilize resources and expertise to address poverty and to pursue sustainable business development in the 50 poorest countries in the world.

Accredited NGOs are invited to attend the High-Level segment meeting.

Special High-Level meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization

The 26 April High Level meeting of ECOSOC provided a unique forum to discuss issues of coherence and coordination among key institutions dealing with issues of finance, trade and development. It witnessed unprecedented participation by a Head of State (Finland), Bretton Woods Institutions Boards (19 World Bank and 8 IMF Executive Directors) and a significant number of Finance and other Ministers (about 15 Ministers and Deputy Ministers) and Central Bank Governors. For the first time, the President of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board also participated. The level of participation and engagement was a testimony to the importance attached to this meeting.

Besides the overall theme of coherence, coordination and cooperation, the more specific focus of the roundtables was on: private flows and trade; role of multilateral institutions in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and debt sustainability and debt relief. These themes resonate with the on-going debate on trade and finance institutions and ECOSOC and placed the discussion in a broader context.

Informal session to assess the work of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries Emerging from Conflict

On 3 May 2004, the Economic and Social Council held an informal brainstorming session to assess the work of its Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries Emerging from Conflicts. Thus far, two Groups have been set up, on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi.

The event that was attended by the Minister of Planning of Burundi, Ambassadors, the UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General in Burundi, the UN Resident Coordinator in Bissau, senior officials of UNDP and DPA, the Special Adviser on Africa and field representatives of the World Bank and the IMF, generated a lively and open discussion on all aspects of the work of the Advisory Groups.

The assessment exercise recognized, among others, that the Ad Hoc Groups had functioned in an innovative and non-bureaucratic manner and made recommendations that strengthened the link between development assistance and political & security issues, thus contributing to the comprehensive approach to peace-building that the UN system has been advocating. Many speakers emphasized the important role of the Groups in promoting effective coordination at three major levels: (i) among United Nations agencies at Headquarters and on the ground; (ii) the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods Institutions, as stressed and welcomed by the country director for Guinea-Bissau of the IMF and the Country Director for the Great Lakes region of the World Bank; and (iii) at the intergovernmental level, e.g. between the Security Council and ECOSOC. The latter was considered a major step forward in strengthening the coherency of the work of the UN system.

Informal panel discussion on ECOSOC reform issues

The 7 May panel discussion on ECOSOC reform generated renewed interest on this issue and helped in clarifying the possibilities for further reform. The presentations by the six panelists (Mr. Gert Rosenthal, Mr. Ivan Šimonovic, Mr. Jonathan Moore, Mr. Edward Luck, Ms. Nafis Sadik, and Mr. James O.C. Jonah) clustered around four

main themes: (i) major structural or radical reform of the Council; (ii) organizational reform dealing with arrangements for various segments of the substantive session; (iii) functional reform, particularly the coordination role of the Council; and (iv) reform of its relationships with civil society and other relevant actors.

Global Forum on Internet governance

The issue of Internet governance was one of the most intensely debated at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in December 2003. The summit decided that there was a need for further discussion on internet issue so that a consensus could emerge. The ICT Task Force responded by organizing a Global Forum on Internet Governance held in New York on 26-27 March 2004 in conjunction with the sixth Task Force meeting. The Forum attracted more than 300 representatives from all stakeholder groups including Task Force members, leaders of the Internet community, government officials and representatives of the private sector, civil society and academia.

The Forum provided an important opportunity for all stakeholders to improve their understanding of the many issues that fall under the rubric of Internet governance, to clarify the positions of the many stakeholders, involved and to solidify areas of common ground. Participants engaged in an open and inclusive dialogue, sharing their perspectives, concerns and vision for the Information Society of the future. Broad support for a number of baseline principles that should guide the evolution of governance arrangements emerged through the course of the discussions. Some issues were also identified on which international cooperation is required, and there was general recognition of the need for effective participation of developing countries and

civil society in governance arrangements. The Forum will constitute an important contribution to the Secretary-General's consultations on Internet governance, leading up to the formation of a Working Group on the subject.

Resumed Organizational Session

The resumed organization session of the Council was held on 4 May. During the session, the Council elected members to a number of its subsidiary body.

The Council completed its Statistical Commission with the election, by acclamation, of China and Japan from the Asian States; Hungary from the Eastern European States; Colombia and Mexico from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom from the Western European and Other States. They will all serve four-year terms beginning on 1 January 2005.

Also by acclamation, the Council then elected the following countries to the Commission on Population and Development for four-year terms beginning on 1 January 2005: Cameroon, Comoros and Morocco from the Group of African States; Bangladesh, Indonesia and Malaysia from the Group of Asian States; Bulgaria from the Group of Eastern European States; Brazil, Guyana and Peru from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; and Canada and Germany from the Group of Western European and Other States. The Council postponed the election of two members from the Western European and Other States.

Addressing the Commission's outstanding six vacancies, the Council elected, without a vote, Pakistan from the Asian Group, to fill one of them. The remaining outstanding vacancies were postponed. They included: one member from the Latin

American and Caribbean States, expiring on 31 December 2004; two members from the Asian States, expiring on 31 December 2005; one member each from the Eastern European States and the Latin American and Caribbean States, both expiring on 31 December 2007.

Turning to the Commission for Social Development, the Council elected, also by acclamation, the following countries for four-year terms, beginning in 2005: Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania from the African Group; Bangladesh, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Myanmar from the Asian Group; the Czech Republic from the Eastern European States; Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela from the Latin American and Caribbean Group; and Finland, Italy and the Netherlands from the Western European and Other States.

The Council decided to postpone elections for the following vacancies, which were also supposed to begin in 2005: one African member; one Eastern European member; and one Western European member. Also, the Republic of Moldova was elected to fill an outstanding vacancy that would begin today and expire in 2008.

Taking up elections for the Commission on Human Rights, the Council elected the following members by acclamation for three-year terms beginning on 1 January 2005: Guinea, Kenya, the Sudan and Togo from the African States; Armenia and Romania from the Eastern European States; and Ecuador and Mexico from the Latin American and Caribbean States.

A secret ballot was used to elect the remaining members. From the Asian States, the results of the vote were as follows: Malaysia, 51; Republic of Korea, 45; Pakistan, 43; and Viet Nam, 23. Thus, Malaysia,

Republic of Korea and Pakistan won the election. From the Western European and Other States, the results were as follows: Finland, 48; France, 44; Canada, 38; and Spain, 27. Thus, Finland, France and Canada won the election.

Turning to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Council elected, by acclamation, the following States to four-year terms beginning at the initial meeting in 2005: Mali, Morocco and the United Republic of Tanzania from the Group of African States; Japan and Qatar from the Group of Asian States; Croatia from the Eastern European States; Belize and Peru from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom from the Western European and Other States.

To the Commission on Sustainable Development, the following States were elected, without a vote, to three-year terms, beginning at the organizational meeting in 2005: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe from the Group of African States; China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia and Thailand from the Group of Asian States; Belarus and Serbia and Montenegro from the Eastern European States; Belize, Bolivia, Cuba and Mexico from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Belgium, Canada, Germany, Israel and Italy from the Western European and Other States.

The Council then elected members of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The following countries were elected, by acclamation, to four-year terms beginning on 1 January 2005: Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia and Sierra Leone from the Group of African States; Jordan, Oman and Pakistan from the Group of Asian States;

the Russian Federation from the Eastern European States; Brazil, Jamaica and Peru from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Austria, Italy and the United Kingdom from the Western European and Other States.

After the Council decided to postpone the election of one member from the Eastern European States and one from the Western European and Other States, it elected Italy for a term beginning today and expiring on 31 December 2004.

Turning to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Council elected the following members to three-year terms, beginning on 1 January 2005: Algeria, Ghana and Kenya from the African Group; and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea from the Asian Group. The Council decided to postpone the nomination of one member from the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

The Council then turned to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. By acclamation, it elected the following individuals: Waleed Sa'di (Jordan) and Shen Yongxiang (China) from the Group of Asian States; Sergei Martynov (Belarus) and Andrzej Rzeplinski (Poland) from the Group of Eastern European States; Rocio Barahona Riera (Costa Rica) from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; and Giorgio Malinverni (Switzerland) and Philippe Texier (France) from the Group of Western European and Other States.

By secret ballot, the Council elected the following members from the Group of African States: Mohamed Ezzeldin Abdel-Moneim (Egypt); and Ariranga Govindasamy Pillay (Mauritius). They received 50 and 47 votes, respectively. Haroun Ali Eltayeb (Sudan), with 7 votes was not elected.

Turning to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Marjatta Rasi (Finland), Council President, announced that in accordance with resolution 2000/22, she had appointed eight experts, based on diversity and geographical distribution, to three-year terms, beginning on 1 January 2005. They were: Michael Dodson (Australia); Hassan Id Balkassm (Morocco); Wilton Littlechild (Canada); Aqqaluk Lynge (Denmark); Nina Pacari Vega (Ecuador); Pavel Sulyandziga (Russian Federation); Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (Philippines); and Parshuram Tamang (Nepal).

The following eight candidates were elected, by acclamation, to the same term: Njuma Ekundanayo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and William Ralph Joey Langeveldt (South Africa) from the African States; Qin Xiaomei (China) from the Asian States; Yuri Boychenko (Russian Federation) from the Eastern European States; Eduardo Aguiar de Almeida (Brazil) and Otilia Lux de Coti (Guatemala) from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Ida Nicolaisen (Denmark) from the Western European and Other States.

The Council decided to postpone the election of one member from the Eastern European States for the same term.

For three-year terms beginning on 1 January 2005, the Council elected the following to the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund by acclamation: Mozambique from the Group of African States; China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from the Group of Asian States; the Russian Federation and Ukraine from the Eastern European States; Argentina and Bolivia from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Australia, Germany, Japan, and the Netherlands from the Western European and Other States.

Because Denmark and Canada were resigning, the Council elected by acclamation: Finland to complete Denmark's term, which would end on 31 December 2006; and Norway to complete Canada's term, which would end on 31 December 2005.

The Council then elected, by acclamation, Egypt and Zambia to the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Turning to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the Council elected, by acclamation, the following members to three-year terms beginning on 1 January 2005: Uganda from the African States; the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Kazakhstan from the Asian States; Belarus and Ukraine from the Eastern European States; Guyana and Guatemala from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Portugal, Turkey, Switzerland and the United States from the Western European and Other States.

The Council then held elections for the Executive Board of the World Food Programme. Elected to three-year terms, beginning on 1 January 2005, were the following countries: Ethiopia and Tunisia from the African States; China from the Asian States; Cuba from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Australia and Norway from the Western European and Other States.

Additionally, because Greece was resigning, the Council elected France, by acclamation, to complete that term, which would end on 31 December 2006.

Turning to the Programme Coordination Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the Council elected, by acclamation, the following members: Kenya and Libya from

the African States; India and Nepal from the Asian States; the Russian Federation from the Eastern European States; and Brazil from the Latin American and Caribbean States. Elections to the same term, for two members from the Western European and other States, were postponed.

Elected by acclamation to four-year terms, beginning on 1 January 2005, for the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, were the following members: Ghana, Libya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania from the African States; Bangladesh, China and the United Arab Emirates from the Asian States; the Czech Republic from the Eastern European States; and Belgium, Canada and France from the Western European and Other States.

Elections to the same term for one Asian member, one Eastern European member, three Latin American and Caribbean members and two Western European members were postponed.

The Council then took up a vacancy on the International Narcotics Control Board, which had arisen, owing to the resignation of Jacques Franquet (France). The election was conducted by secret ballot and involved a term beginning today and expiring on 1 March 2007. The results were expected this afternoon.

The Council then conducted one more election by secret ballot. It was intended to choose one additional member of the International Narcotics Control Board from a list of three nominees provided by the World Health Organization. The post entailed a five-year term beginning on 2 March 2005. The results were expected this afternoon.

Committee on Non-Governmental organizations 2004 Regular Session

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At its 2004 regular session, from 10 to 28 May 2004, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had before it 170 applications for consultative status, including applications deferred from its 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 sessions. Of those applications, the Committee recommended 114 applications for consultative status of which 19 were recommended ad referendum, deferred 41 organizations for further consideration at a later date, did not recommend four organizations, close consideration of three organizations and closed consideration of one complaint by a member state. The Committee had also before it seven requests of reclassification of consultative status which it recommended. In addition, it reviewed 63 quadrennial reports. The Committee heard 22 representatives of NGOs.

The following seven draft decisions were made and called for action by the Economic and Social Council:

By draft decision I, the Council would: (a) Grant consultative status to 114 non-governmental organizations; (b) Reclassify 7 NGOs; (c) Note that the Committee took note of 57 quadrennial reports (21 ad referendum); (d) Decide to close consideration of the application of 3 non-governmental organizations; (e) Not grant consultative status to 4 non-governmental organizations; and (f) Close consideration of 1 complaint by a member state.

By draft decision II, the Economic and Social Council would suspend the consultative status of Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaru" for one year.

By draft decision III, the Economic and Social Council would suspend the consulta-

tive status of the Transnational Radical Party for three years.

By draft decision IV, the Economic and Social Council would take note of the present report. The report also brings to the attention of the ECOSOC the decision to: (i) reinstate the organization "Reporters Without Borders"; and (ii) request the "Organization for Peace (ASOPAZCO)" to produce a special report on their activities during the last three years before considering its reinstatement.

On 23rd June, the committee decided that it will not have a resumed session in 2004. Its regular and resumed 2005 sessions will be held respectively on 5-18 January and 9-20 May 2005.

During the session, the committee was informed that the "paperless committee" was adopted as a normal mode of operations. The realization of the paperless committee - a multifunctional electronic meeting record management and archiving system - has been made possible by the generous contribution of the World Job and Food Bank, an organization in special consultative status from Canada that donated thirty laptops, a scanner and server to the United Nations in order to facilitate the work of the committee.

2004 ECOSOC events:

High-Level segment: 28-30 June

Investment Promotion Forum:

28 June: High-Level Policy Dialogue on current developments in the world economy and international economic cooperation

28 June: Roundtable A hosted by UNCDF and ILO: Local private sector development: the role of microfinance/microcredit

28 June: Roundtable B hosted by UNCTAD: Attracting foreign direct investment in LDCs

28 June: Roundtable C hosted by OHRLLS: The role of trade preferences for LDCs in promoting investment

28 June: Roundtable D hosted by UNFIP and UNDP: The role of partnerships in mobilizing resources for LDCs

28 June: Roundtable E hosted by UN-Habitat: Investment in urban water, sanitation and sustainable human settlements development in LDCs

Coordination segment: 1-7 July, includes:

22 June: Panel discussion on "Mainstreaming gender in the work of United Nations systems, particularly intergovernmental bodies"

1 July: Panel discussion on "Working together to promote integrated rural development in developing countries, particularly the least developed countries"

2 July: Panel discussion on "Review and appraisal of UN operational activities in gender mainstreaming"

6 July: Panel discussion on "Achievements in gender mainstreaming in entities of the United Nations system"

Operational activities segment: 7-9 July, includes

7 July: Panel discussion on "the international development agenda and the improvements of the operational activities of the UN system at the country level: effectiveness and challenges"

8 July: Dialogue with heads of funds and programmes on "key policy issues for the TCP, including presentation by UNDP on the operationalization of the World Solidarity Fund"

8 July: Panel discussion on "the role of CCAs and UNDAFs in country-level coherence and coordination"

9 July: Debate on "the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of GA resolution 56/201 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations"

Humanitarian segment: 12- 14 July, includes

The theme of "strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: present and future challenges"

13 July: Panel discussion on “strengthening preparedness and response to natural disasters, with an emphasis on capacity building”

13 July: Panel discussion on “field-level coordination for the purpose of continuing the presence and operations of the United Nations humanitarian assistance in higher risk environments”

General segment: 15-22 July

19 July: Interactive panel discussion between the chairpersons of the functional commissions and ECOSOC

Concluding session: 23 July