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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 prepares 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. Supplementary formal meetings as well as informal panels on topical issues are held throughout the year.

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Special high-level meeting of the ECOSOC with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) hosted a day-long special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions (BWI), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Unprecedented participation by BWI Boards (21 World Bank and 8 IMF Executive Directors) and a significant number of Finance and other Ministers, Central Bank Governors, as well as the President of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board was a testimony to the high importance attached to this meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to foster dialogue among the Economic and Social Council, the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. This year's meeting dialogue focused on "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus: Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration".

In his opening remarks, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the coming months offered a unique opportunity to make real changes in the international system. All developing countries should commit themselves to sound, transparent and accountable national strategies. All donor countries should commit themselves to timetable for reaching the 0.7 as ODA target, with front-loading through an international finance facility or other mechanisms, and an active search for new sources of finance. He also emphasized the need to find new ways to ensure that the developing countries' debt burden is

genuinely sustainable. No less important, there was need for a commitment to complete the Doha Round next year. There was also need for more specific commitments to address the special needs of Africa. "The September Summit", he said, "will be the ideal moment to take those decisions".

During the morning panel the participants were briefed about the spring meeting of the Bretton Woods institutions that were held in Washington over the previous weekend. Mr. Trevor Manuel, Minister of Finance of South Africa and Chair of the Development Committee, reported on the meeting of the Development Committee, a joint ministerial body of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the outcome of a ministerial-level meeting of the International Monetary and Finance Committee was presented by Mr. Augustin Carstens who represented the Chair of the Committee. Ms. Mary Whelan, President of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD made a presentation on the work of the Board. Following opening statements, various aspects of the main theme were discussed in six round tables addressing the following three issues: (i) Policies and strategies; (ii) Trade, investment, and private flows; and (iii) ODA, innovative sources of financing and debt.

In his closing statement, the President of ECOSOC noted that there had been a wide measure of convergence on many issues, but also differences of perception on several others. In the months before the Council's substantive session in July, some of those specific issues needed to be addressed in greater depth so as to promote a broader consensus and in order to take action by the September Summit. In doing so, three aspects would be essential: (i) continued cooperation and coordination between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD, and leadership from capitals; (ii) a sincere commitment to fulfill the agreements; (iii) and a better

international macroeconomic environment, where the imbalances, concerns and threats mentioned during the dialogue would be addressed, so as to enable the development agenda to move forward.

For more information on the meetings: <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/bwi2005/>

ECOSOC Preparatory process of the 2005 High-level Segment

In preparation for its 2005 high-level segment on the theme of “Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities”, the Economic and Social Council will hold a two-day informal meeting on 16-17 March 2005.

The opening session featured statements by H.E. Mr. Munir Akram (Pakistan), President of the Economic and Social Council; On behalf of H.E. Mr. Jean Ping, President of the General Assembly; and Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; a keynote speech by Mr. Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor to United Nations Secretary General on the Millennium Development Goals; and remarks by Mr. François Bourguignon, Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President, Development Economics, World Bank.

The round tables of this meeting organized by agencies, funds and programmes, were on the following topics: eradication of poverty and hunger; education and literacy; health and mortality; global partnerships and financing development; gender equality and the empowerment of women; environmental sustainability; and implementation of the internationally agreed development goals,

including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, at the country-level.

For more information on the outcomes of the roundtable discussions: www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/16-17March2005.html.

ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti mission

From 12-16 April 2005, members of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group traveled to the country to assess the situation on the ground as well as to formulate recommendations on: (i) longer-term approaches to reconstruction; (ii) moving beyond the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF); and (iii) the transition from peacemaking to peacebuilding. It also coincided with a mission of the Security Council.

During the mission the Ad Hoc Advisory Group met over 200 people from various sectors during its visit. On the Government and political side, meetings were held with the Interim President and the Prime Minister, members of “Le Conseil des Sages”, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Planning and External Cooperation, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Public Works, Transports and Communication, Environment, Women’s Affairs and Public Health and Population as well as representatives of these and other technical ministries. In addition, the group had working sessions with national and international focal points and coordinators of ‘sectoral tables’ established in the framework of the Interim Cooperation Framework, representatives of the business sector and professional organizations, Haitian and international civil society organizations involved in reconstruction efforts and social care, the “core group” (composed of the local diplomatic community, major donors and the International Financial Institutions, under the chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General),

MINUSTAH staff and the whole United Nations country team.

The Economic and Social Council decided to reactivate the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti in July 2004. The Council underscored the need for a long-term development strategy to promote socio-economic recovery and stability, and ensure coherence and sustainability of international support for Haiti.

For more information:
<http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/adhoc/haiti.html>

ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea Bissau

In line with its advocacy work, the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory on Guinea Bissau participated in a meeting of Guinea Bissau's Partners to prepare for the Roundtable, Lisbon, 10-11 February. Similar meetings has been postponed several times in the past.

At the meeting, the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau strongly supported efforts being undertaken to address three critical short-term needs: emergency budgetary support, additional support for control of the locust plague and security sector reform. The group encouraged donors to support these short-term needs by financial contributions.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau also underscored the importance of a greater coordination of priorities, programmes and related financial and technical support for Guinea-Bissau coming from the UN system and from bilateral and other multilateral partners for the reconstruction and development of Guinea-Bissau. Furthermore, the importance of a common framework of the

challenges of peacebuilding should guide both internal and external actors.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau was created in 2002 with the objective of examining humanitarian and economic needs, prepare recommendations for a long-term programme of support and provide advice on how to ensure assistance of the international community was adequate coherent and well coordinated.

For more information:
<http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/adhoc/africa/>

International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the MDGs 28-30 March 2005, Islamabad, Pakistan

The International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was held in Islamabad, Pakistan from 28-30 March and was a collaborative effort between several outstanding institutions including the "All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA)," an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC and the UN-NGO-IRENE (Informal Regional Network) National Coordinator for Pakistan; the Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan; and the United Nations system.

The International Conference was initiated by APWA to mark the centenary birth of its Patron-in-Chief Begum Raa'na Liaquat Ali Khan and hosted by the Government of Pakistan to review worldwide progress made so far in achieving gender equality with and through the implementation of the MDGs. The Conference evaluated the current situation of women and development and also took stock of the progress made in implementing the recommendations of various other international conferences and conventions, notably the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and the Millennium

Declaration. Proposals were also made to be included into the "Islamabad Plan of Action: For Achieving Gender Equality, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, Five-Year Plan (2005-2010)" which was adopted by all participants and will be submitted to the 2005 High-Level Segment of ECOSOC in the form of an NGO statement from APWA.

The International Conference addressed the major challenges and opportunities faced by decision makers in the area of gender mainstreaming and the MDGs. During its plenary sessions and five concurrent workshops on gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights and peace, poverty alleviation, health, and education respectively. Through interactive and rich discussions, leading experts presented papers that evaluated key issues while all participants shared their knowledge, expertise and experience on gender mainstreaming strategies and innovative initiatives that would help meet the challenges of the third millennium. The Conference emphasized the importance of strengthening gender mainstreaming policies and urged all key stakeholders to eliminate the gap between policy and practice.

The conference noted that the International Community has reached a critical juncture in the path towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the realization of the MDGs. A gender-based approach to development is essential and full realization of the promises and policies of our Governments through good governance, human rights and partnership development at all levels is necessary. The passionate spirit, fruitful deliberations and comprehensive outcome of the International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the MDGs were testaments to the international solidarity of not only the world's women but of the global community as we strive to achieve our dream of gender equality and sustainable development for all.

UN ITC Task Force Accra, Ghana, January 28-29, 2005

The United Nations ICT Task force in partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organized a conference on Internet Governance in Accra 28-29 January. The conference was attended by representatives from governments, private sectors, civil society organizations and academia as well as IT engineers and ICT experts, who exchanged their views on the technical, ethical, societal and legal dimensions of the global Internet Governance from an African perspective. Of particular focus was WSIS phase II scheduled to take place in Tunis 16-18, November 2005 as well as domain name management and technical issues, opportunities and challenges of the current IPR regime, inputs and recommendations to the Working Group on Internet Governance, the role of stakeholders in national and global ICT policy making processes affecting Internet Governance and human and institutional capacity building.

Pre-Conference on Internet Governance to the WSIS Africa Regional Preparatory Conference, Geneva, Switzerland, February 7-9, 2005

Organized under the umbrella of the "Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development" (UNCTAD/OECD/ITU/UIS/UN Regional Commissions/UN ICT Task Force/World Bank), the main goal of this global meeting was to consolidate the outcomes of regional workshops on information society indicators that were held in the 4th quarter of 2004, and agree on a final list of core ICT indicators to be collected by all countries, including on basic access and usage by households and individuals, businesses and schools. It also discussed developing country technical assistance needs in regard to the compilation of ICT indicators. The event also identified ICT indicators relevant to achieving the MDGs, and presented ongoing work

concerning the creation and maintenance of an international database on ICT indicators. The outcome of the meeting provided concrete suggestions on how to measure information society developments, as an input to the second phase of WSIS and its follow-up.

For more information: measuring-ict.unctad.org

United Nations Evaluation Group: Annual Meeting 2005

The 2005 Annual Meeting of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) took place on 26-29 April, hosted by FAO. It was the longest meeting ever held in UNEG history. UNEG consists of the evaluation units in all UN system organizations spanning development, humanitarian, normative and other mandates. UNDP chairs the group and provides the secretariat for its functioning.

DESA participates in the work of UNEG in connection with its responsibility for the overall assessment of effectiveness of the UN system's development cooperation and its country-level functioning. The outcome of this evaluation work by DESA feeds into the reports for the operational activities segment of ECOSOC and the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) of operational activities for development of the UN system of the General Assembly.

The agenda of the meeting covered several issues in all domains of interest to the system: development, humanitarian, normative and others. The Group was able to finalize and adopt Norms and Standards for Evaluation, which can be used by the entire system to make progress through common professional quality standards in evaluation

activities, thereby contributing to UN reform by enhancing credibility of system's work.

Another important advance made at the meeting was the agreement to launch a concrete work programme with the following components: (a) to support evaluation capacity development (ECD) for the UN system and the developing countries; (b) to undertake a reflection on the relations between Results Based Management (RBM) and evaluation; and (c) to carry out joint country evaluations on issues that are central to the effectiveness of the UN system's development cooperation. Task Forces have been established respectively on quality stamp for evaluation, ECD, RBM and evaluation, and country evaluation.

DESA, in preparation for this meeting, chaired the UNEG Task Force 'Working Together', which reviewed the practice of joint evaluations in the system, and contributed to the establishment of the new Task Forces. As a follow-up to the meeting, DESA will co-chair, together with UNDP and FAO, the UNEG Country Evaluation Task Force, which should enrich the evaluative evidence on the effectiveness of the UN system and its country-level development role. That collaborative effort with other UN organizations and member countries will be part of the evaluation activities planned for the preparation of the 2007 TCPR. DESA will also participate in the UNEG Task Force on ECD and the one on RBM and evaluation.

This year was as a turning point for the Group, as UNEG was celebrating its 21st anniversary. At the TCPR concluded in December 2004 (resolution 59/250), the General Assembly recognized the contribution of the evaluators of the system and requested strengthening of the UN system's evaluation activities. It also encouraged UNEG to make further progress in system-wide collaboration on evaluation, with focus on development results. The response of UNEG through the work

programme adopted at this meeting seizes this opportunity to enhance UN system's development cooperation through increased collaboration in evaluation initiatives in view of the 2007 TCPR.

World Summit on Information Society - the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom – 2 of the Tunis phase)

The second Preparatory Committee Meeting (PrepCom-2) of the Tunis Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was held in Geneva, Switzerland, 17-25 February 2005. The meeting focused on preparations for the Summit that will take place in Tunis, Tunisia, 16-18 November 2005. It also evaluated progress made on the WSIS Plan of Action, which was agreed to by 175 countries in Geneva in December 2003. PrepCom-2 began considering the final outcome to be adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Tunis Summit. The President of the WSIS Preparatory Committee submitted a document aimed at reaffirming political commitments made in the Geneva Phase and ensuring that the Tunis Phase is a 'Summit of Solutions' that will bring the benefits of the Information Society to all of humanity. PrepCom-2 is intended to achieve consensus on the structure and content of the final document(s), with the exception of matters relating to Internet governance, which will be dealt with at PrepCom-3.

For more information:
www.itu.int/wsis/preparatory2/pc2/index.html

Harnessing the Potential of ICTs for Education, Dublin, Ireland, April 13-14, 2005

The United Nations ICT Task Force Global Forum on "Harnessing the Potential of ICTs for Education" was held in Dublin from 13-14 April and explored the intersection of ICT, education, development and the MDGs. The Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI), incubated through the combined efforts of two ICT Task Force working groups and now a free-standing initiative, will co-host the Forum. This Global Forum brought together panellists and participants from the fields of education, ICTs and development, encouraging the exchange of diverse perspectives and embracing those who may be new to the ICT4D discussion. The aim was to engage new actors, build on past experiences, break new ground and forge new partnerships. Key areas included how to improve education, empower communities, and accelerate socio-economic development, thereby supporting achievement of the MDGs by 2015, through the widespread deployment of ICTs in schools.

In conjunction with the Global Forum, the United Nations ICT Task Force held an open consultations meeting on the concept of a Global Alliance on ICT for Development to seek views of all stakeholders.

The UN Millennium Summit, the G8 Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT-Force), the United Nations ICT Task Force, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), and others, have launched a process of bringing stakeholders from government, business and civil society together for global policy debate on the Millennium Development Goals and ICT policy and development. A truly effective and sustainable collaboration among the principal stakeholders will be essential for follow up after the completion of MS + 5 and WSIS-Tunis in 2005 if the potential of ICT to promote development is to be effectively harrassed.

The consultations during the Global Forum in Dublin addressed issues and explored options regarding the Alliance mission, modus operandi, membership, governance and funding.

For more information: www.unictf.org

Publications currently for sale:

Publication on the high-level Segment theme of 2004: *Resource Mobilization and the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Poverty Eradication in Least Developed Countries.*

Publication on harmful products: *the consolidated list of Products Whose Consumption and/or Sales have been Banned, Withdrawn, Severely restricted or not approved by Government* (ninth and tenth issues).

Future events:

- 12 May: Alcohol Consumption, Awareness, Education, and Treatment: Contribution to World Health
- 12 May: Innovations in Developing Safe Water through the use of ICTs
- 12 May: New Digital Perspective in Fish Farming
- 6 June: Conference on Planning Sustainable Urban Growth and Sustainable Architecture
- 7 June: Intellectual Property and Development
- 7 June: the Critical role of nutrition for reach the Millennium Development Goals and success of the Millennium Development Project
- 22 June 2005: Tripartite conference on Inter-faith Cooperation for Peace

Substantive session:

- 29 June-1 July: High-level Segment
- 29 June: High-level policy dialogue
- 05-07 July: Coordination Segment
- 08-12 July: Operational Activities Segment
- 13-18 July: Humanitarian Affairs Segment
- 18-25 July: General Segment
- 26-27 July: Conclusion of ECOSOC