



# ECOSOC News

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

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. Its 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 United Nations 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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### The Members of the Bureau of ECOSOC

#### President of ECOSOC:

H. E. Ambassador Dalius Cekuolis (Lithuania)

#### Vice-Presidents of ECOSOC:

H. E. Ambassador Youcef Yousfi (Algeria)

H. E. Ambassador Léo Mérorès (Haïti)

H. E. Ambassador Hjálmar W. Hannesson (Iceland)

H. E. Ambassador Hilario G. Davide (Philippines)



Opening of the 2007 Substantive Session of ECOSOC at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 2 July 2007. For more pictures, please visit the [ECOSOC Photo internet page](#) .

## I - ECOSOC 2007 Substantive Session, 2-26 July 2007 Geneva

### A - High-level Segment of ECOSOC, 2-5 July 2007



Ambassador Dalius Cekuolis at the opening of the 2007 High-level Segment of ECOSOC

This year's High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council translated the vision of the 2005 World Summit into reality with the launch of its new functions, the [Annual Ministerial Review \(AMR\)](#) and the [Development Cooperation Forum \(DCF\)](#).

The session, which was opened by [Dalius Cekuolis](#), the President of the Council, featured a statement by Secretary-General [Ban Ki-moon](#) and the President of the General Assembly, [Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa](#). The Council also heard keynote statements from [Micheline Calmy-Rey](#), President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and [Gediminas Kirkilas](#), Prime Minister of Lithuania.

The formal opening was followed by a [high-level policy dialogue](#) with representatives of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the UN Conference on Trade and Development on current developments in the world economy and developments in international cooperation. Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, who moderated the dialogue noted that while economic growth in most economies had remained encouraging, the pace of world economic growth was slowing. Participants generally agreed on the assessment of the current economic growth, and noted that the increasing trade opportunities play a vital role in growth and development.

The high mark of the first Annual Ministerial Review, which focused on eradication of poverty and hunger, was the [national voluntary presentations by the Ministers of six developing countries](#) (Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia and Ghana). These presentations led to a truly interactive and engaging discussion and became an occasion for knowledge sharing and information exchange. Inspired by these discussions, the Netherlands announced it will volunteer next year, the first developed country to do so.

The following five key messages emerged from the Annual Ministerial Review: (1) The AMR, in particular the national voluntary presentations, is a positive innovation and its focus on implementation is to be welcomed; (2) While progress made in eradicating poverty is to be welcomed, progress remains uneven, with some parts of the world showing only limited progress; (3) There is a need for a long-term, broad and comprehensive approach to eradicating poverty. Efforts are needed to link growth and poverty and to ensure that growth is “pro-poor”; (4) There is a need to fully implement the global partnership for development and to enhance the momentum generated by the 2005 World Summit. In this regard, there was a call for the development of benchmarks and indicators for MDG 8; (5) Adverse effects of climate change pose a threat to development and countries must work together to secure a post-Kyoto multilateral regime. These key messages were also reflected in the [Ministerial Declaration](#), adopted by consensus following intense and protracted negotiations. The Declaration has contributed to the revival of ECOSOC by sending a message that there is a broad-based consensus in dealing with the challenges of eradication of poverty and hunger and that the international community is united in dealing with the obstacles in the realization of MDG1.

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The discussions that took place during the launch of the [Development Cooperation Forum](#) showed that Member States have high expectations of the role that the Forum can play as an impartial and universal platform to improve the governance and impact of international development cooperation for achieving the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs). The discussions provided an illustration of the challenges that donors and programme countries face in their endeavours to enhance the delivery and impact of development assistance. Programme countries, for instance, are often overwhelmed by the procedural requirements of donors and most of them need capacity building. It was emphasized that the pursuit of a better impact of assistance must be premised on national ownership and government leadership while taking into account domestic but also international accountability. The dialogue further highlighted the growing importance of voluntary contributions by developing countries to international development cooperation, as a complement to traditional North-South cooperation. It was also noted that adequately gauging the level of global development cooperation activities would help ensure the coherence of different development actors by providing a clearer picture of current resource flows. Overall, the launch of the Development Cooperation Forum confirmed broad agreement on a number of principles to promote effective and coherent international development cooperation. The task of the 2008 DCF will thus be to offer strong analysis and provide guidance which will enable stakeholders to build on this foundation and move forward towards results.

The AMR and DCF were preceded by a [thematic discussion](#) on “Strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macro-economic policies”. The discussion included a general debate and two roundtable dialogues on “Growth, poverty eradication and equity – emerging paradigm” and “Coherence and coordination of macroeconomic policies at all levels”. During the general debate, there was widely-shared understanding that the link between economic growth and poverty reduction was complex, requiring further study, including the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction to equity. The need for broad-based macroeconomic policies was also recognized and more active coordination of macroeconomic policies at the international level was called for. In the more integrated global economy, it was recognized that there was a need to increase the voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision making.

The [Innovation Fair](#), organized for the first time in parallel to the High-level Segment, complemented the discussions during the Segment. Several UN system agencies, ten private sector entities and 29 NGOs showcased their innovative products and projects used in the fight against poverty and hunger. The objective of the Fair was to provide the opportunity for the private sector, foundations and other civil society organizations to share examples of innovative products, approaches or practices and to disseminate them more widely to Member States and other actors, to raise the awareness of decision makers at all levels, civil society actors and of the public at large of potential solutions for implementing the United Nations Development Agenda and to promote the transfer/sharing of knowledge, expertise and experience through networking and peer-to-peer learning. For more information, please visit the [Innovation Fair Photo Gallery](#)

The High-level Segment was preceded by an [NGO Forum on Development](#) held in Geneva on 28-30 June. Over 500 participants gave this forum great energy. Nine NGOs spoke subsequently at the High-level Segment, five of which presented the outcome of the NGO Forum on Development.

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## B - High Level Dialogue of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions with the Economic and Social Council

The [High Level Dialogue of the Executive Secretaries of the United Nations Regional Commissions with the Economic and Social Council](#), held on 6 July 2007, addressed, from a regional perspective, the theme for the thematic discussion, “Strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macroeconomic policies” and the theme for the annual ministerial review, “Strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macroeconomic policies.”

The Executive Secretaries presented a regionally-nuanced analysis of the relationship between growth and equity within their respective regions. They made concrete suggestions on strategies and policies required to ensure that absolute poverty and economic inequality are reduced while overall growth is promoted. They put particular emphasis on long-term sustainability of development and the achievement of the MDGs at the national level. At the same time, the presenters called on donor governments to ensure that the manner in which official development assistance (ODA) is provided supports reducing poverty and promoting pro-poor growth.

Several key messages emerged from the presentations to help guide governments instituting policies to promote pro-poor growth:

- Specific macroeconomic fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policy recommendations were made by ESCWA;
- ECE stressed that pro-poor growth is intricately linked to pro-employment policies;
- ESCAP noted that the promotion of public expenditure on public goods such as health and education, rural infrastructure, and water sanitation is a precondition for pro-poor growth. At the same time, the presentations also stressed the need to specifically target policies to assist vulnerable groups, such as ethnic minorities or the rural poor, and ensure that the empowerment of women is prioritized;
- ECA identified poverty, unemployment, income inequality and commodity dependence among the key challenges confronting Africa’s increasingly determined efforts for sustainable development. It also stressed that the challenges should be addressed at three levels: national, regional and global;
- ECLAC called for its Member States to continue their efforts to improve good governance, income distribution, and to increase the efficiency and financing of social policies to achieve the MDGs targets. It also outlined the ways in which middle-income countries should be assisted in their efforts to be integrated into the global economy.

During an interactive discussion, delegations from all regions reiterated their strong support for the Regional Commissions and for the critical role that they play in supporting nations through analytical work and technical cooperation, as well as in promoting regional integration. The delegate of the United States made a concrete recommendation for the Regional Commissions to play an active role in the evaluation of the “One UN” pilot initiatives.

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## C - Coordination Segment, 6-10 July 2007

The [Coordination Segment](#) adopted two resolutions: on “[the role of the UN system in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all](#)”, which was the theme of the coordination segment this year; and on the “[role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including 61/16](#)”.

The first resolution followed up on the 2006 Ministerial Declaration which requested the UN system to integrate the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in its policies, programmes and activities. The resolution requested UN system organizations to continue their efforts in this regard and encouraged all relevant agencies to collaborate in using, adapting and evaluating the application of the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work. It also invited the UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies to assess and adopt the three-phased approach proposed by ILO to promote the goals of full employment and decent work.

The resolution encouraged UN system organizations and the international financial institutions (IFIs) to collaborate closely with the ILO to reach a better understanding and implementation of the decent work agenda and to develop mechanisms to share expertise and lessons learned regarding the impact of relevant policies and programmes on employment and decent work.

Finally, the resolution requested the UN system organizations to coordinate their activities and programmes related to employment and decent-work and to promote a comprehensive approach to these objectives. It also requested the UN system to promote synergies and strategic collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and IFIs, Governments and representatives of employers and workers, to support the implementation of relevant national strategies and programmes promoting employment and decent work.

The second resolution focused on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major UN conferences and summits and reaffirmed the need to continue to strengthen the Council as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination. It underscored the close link between this exercise and the adaptation of the working methods of ECOSOC, the discussion of which will be resumed later in the year. The resolution stressed the importance of the adoption of a multi-year programme of work for the Annual Ministerial Review.

[Two panel discussions](#) were also held during the coordination segment to enrich the debate. The first one was on the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work, and the other on the role of the UN system in promoting the employment and decent work agenda in national strategies frameworks, focusing on the experience of Latin America.

A second panel discussion, in a format of a dialogue between the ECOSOC Bureau and the Chairpersons of the functional commissions, addressed ways to strengthen the role of the Council and its subsidiary machinery in promoting a coordinated and integrated follow-up to the major UN conferences and summits and also considered how the work of the functional commissions could contribute to promoting the goals of employment and decent work.

The Council decided to focus on “the role of the United Nations system in implementing the ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration of 2007” at the coordination segment of the 2008 substantive session.



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## D - Operational Activities Segment, 10-13 July 2007

The [Operational Activities Segment](#) had as an overarching theme the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development (TCPOR) which the General Assembly will undertake this fall. During the debates, Member States emphasized the importance of the TCPOR as the guiding framework for operational activities for development of the entire UN system. The debate underscored the importance of national ownership of and leadership in these activities and the related need to build national capacities. Discussions also stressed that operational activities should be assessed in terms of their contribution to countries' efforts to achieve Internationally Agreed Development Goals (including MDGs). It was also noted that countries need to access the full range of knowledge and expertise of the UN system. The need to further improve support to transition from relief to development through better coordination with peace-building efforts and more sustained funding, as well as the importance of regional dimensions, were amongst other themes of the debate. A proposal was made for good multilateral donorship that emphasizes the importance of increased core resources for the United Nations system and more stable and predictable non-core resources.

Overall, the debate generated suggestions for the draft recommendations that will be contained in the report of the Secretary-General that will inform the negotiations of the General Assembly on the TCPOR in the fall of 2007. These negotiations will lead to the adoption of a new TCPOR resolution to guide the operational work of the UN system for the next three years.

## E - Humanitarian Affairs Segment, 16-18 July 2007

The theme of the [Humanitarian Affairs Segment](#) was "Strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance through enhancing the effectiveness of needs-based humanitarian assistance". At the end of its work, the Council adopted by consensus a resolution on [Strengthening of the coordination of the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations](#).

The resolution highlighted the need for capacity building of national, local and regional organizations, broader partnerships among humanitarian organizations, the incorporation of a gender perspective in humanitarian operations, as well as the need to improve humanitarian stand-by capacities, including the facilitation of standby arrangements with the private sector. Member States also requested more analysis on the use of military assets in natural disaster response and supported the call for further improvements in humanitarian financing mechanisms, such as consolidated and flash appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund and other funds.

Thirty-two Member States and eight UN agencies and international organizations participated in the general debate. This year's overarching theme was the need for improved disaster response, including risk reduction, preparedness and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. In this respect, several delegations called for more focused efforts to build capacity for disaster response at local, national and regional levels.

Both donor governments and beneficiary countries supported the Central Emergency Response Fund as a measure to bring timeliness, predictability and impartiality to humanitarian operations. Delegations also supported the development of other non-earmarked country-level humanitarian funding mechanisms, alongside improvements to needs assessments, financial tracking and funds administration. Humanitarian agencies highlighted their own emergency response funds as integral

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parts of the financing system and spoke about the need for support to all funds so that they may work in complementary ways.

Donor governments, as well as some developing countries, were broadly supportive of ongoing efforts to improve the humanitarian response system, including the cluster approach and improvements to the resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator system. However many developing countries called for more analysis and discussion on such initiatives before intergovernmental organs could fully take them on board.

Many Member States and operational agencies highlighted the need to ensure access for humanitarian workers as a fundamental right of populations in need. However, several delegations took the position that access must be clearly based on the principles outlined in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

Some delegations recommended that OCHA adopt a regular practice of reporting to ECOSOC whenever major natural disasters occur and a request for assistance is made by the affected State. As ECOSOC has an important role to play in strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance, such a request is welcomed by Under Secretary General John Holmes. Follow-up to such ad hoc ECOSOC meetings should be based on General Assembly resolution 61/16, which stipulates that they should raise awareness and promote the engagement of all stakeholders in support of international relief efforts aimed at addressing emergencies.

In addition, two formal panel discussions took place during the Segment, one on the use of military assets in natural disaster relief and the other on needs-based humanitarian financing, including the Central Emergency Response Fund. Both panels featured presentations by high-level government officials, UN agencies, the International Red Cross/Red Crescent System, non-governmental organizations and policy institutes.

Three informal side events were also held, including on HIV/AIDS in emergencies, hosted by OCHA, the status of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, hosted by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and on the funding of national and local responses to “forgotten disasters”, hosted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The launch of the mid-year review of the consolidated humanitarian appeals also took place in the margins of the Segment.

## F - General Segment, 19-26 July 2007

The Economic and Social Council held its [General Segment](#) on 19-26 July 2007. The Council adopted 34 resolutions and 47 decisions on a range of recommendations contained in the reports of the United Nations specialized Agencies, the United Nations Funds and Programmes, its subsidiary and ad hoc bodies.

The Segment opened with a discussion of the implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, based on the updated report of the Secretary-General on the role of the Council in this field. ECOSOC recognizes the need to further enhance coordination and cooperation between the Council and its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies, and also emphasizes that the contribution of non-governmental organizations and the private sector to the work of the Council should be further encouraged and improved.

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The annual overview report of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination presented the major developments in interagency cooperation within the framework of the Chief Executives Board and its High Level Committees on Programmes and Management during the period covering the fall 2006 and spring 2007 sessions of the Board.

The reports of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on countries emerging from conflict (Haiti and Guinea-Bissau) were also presented to ECOSOC. They stressed the development challenges and the need for continued international support to these countries in post-crisis context. These reports reviewed developments in the countries concerned and made recommendations on their economic recovery and reconstruction. The Council decided to extend the mandates of both Ad Hoc Advisory Groups until its substantive session in July 2008.

The Council also adopted a series of decisions on recommendations contained in part I of the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. It decided to grant consultative status to 89 non-governmental organizations. The Council decided to withdraw for one year the consultative status of the NGO “Liberal International”.

The Council considered and adopted texts on the reports of other UN entities working in the development field, among them UNAIDS and UN-Habitat. The Council urged Governments, donors and UNAIDS to significantly expand efforts to address inequality and inequity between men and women, gender-based violence, including sexual and physical abuse of women, girls and boys, harmful gender-based practices and social and cultural norms, stigma, discrimination, deficiencies in sexual and reproductive health and lack of respect for human rights as major factors that heighten vulnerability to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, including through increased and better coordinated funding to national programmes and civil society partners.

In a decision on Human Settlements, adopted without a vote, the Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda, decided to transmit the report to the General Assembly for consideration at its sixty-second session, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda for consideration by the Council at its substantive session of 2008.

As regards regional cooperation issues, ECOSOC adopted two resolutions: on the review of the intergovernmental machinery of the Economic Commission for Africa and on the admission of the Republic of Korea as a Member State of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

ECOSOC discussed issues concerning the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, women and development, and the advancement of women. Speakers welcomed the progress made in recent years on mainstreaming gender equality, but noted that a clear gap remained between the commitments and their implementation by countries. Migrant and indigenous women were particularly vulnerable groups. Gender equality was essential for sustainable and socio-economic development. Concerted efforts should be enhanced to build individual and organisational capacity for gender mainstreaming. A text was also adopted on future work to strengthen the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The Council approved, *inter alia*, a resolution recommended by the Commission on the Status of Women in which it called upon the international community to continue to provide urgently needed assistance and services in an effort to alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis being faced by Palestinian women and their families.



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The Economic and Social Council considered and adopted a resolution on the review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. The least developed countries had made tremendous efforts to build enabling national environments for the implementation of the Programme of Action. It was noted that the economic performance of the least developed countries had been improving, and they were making good efforts towards attaining the target of annual GDP growth rate of 7 percent.

The Council took action on draft resolutions submitted to it by its functional commissions (Statistical Commission, Commission on Population and Development, Commission for Social Development, Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Commission on Sustainable Development, and United Nations Forum on Forests).

The Economic and Social Council discussed the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations. ECOSOC also adopted by vote a resolution on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan, in which it called for the lifting of the severe restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people to alleviate the desperate humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Council took up issues of international cooperation in the field of informatics and of science and technology for development, and in a decision recommended in the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the flow of information for the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, ECOSOC, among other things, requested the Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development annually on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. The Council adopted the provisional agenda and documentation for the twelfth session of the Commission and the report of the Commission on its eleventh session.

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## II– More Information

### Substantive Session of ECOSOC

**High-level Segment:** <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/index.shtml>

**Coordination Segment:** <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/cs2007.shtml>

**Operational Activities Segment:** <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/oa2007.shtml>

**Humanitarian Affairs Segment:** <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/has2007.shtml>

**General Segment:** <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/gs2007.shtml>

### Other Information

**Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):** <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/>

**About ECOSOC:** <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/about/>

**UN Press Releases and Meetings Coverage on ECOSOC:**  
<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/ecopress.shtml>

**Press Releases and Meetings Coverage of the 2007 Substantive Session of ECOSOC:**  
<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/newsandpress.shtml>

**2007 Meetings and Events of ECOSOC and its Subsidiary Bodies:**  
<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/meetings/>

**For further information on the Press Releases and Meetings Coverage of the Functional Commissions of ECOSOC, please visit** <http://www.un.org/apps/pressreleases/index.asp>

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