

Check Against Delivery

**2006 ECOSOC High-Level Segment
Opening Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Ali Hachani, President of ECOSOC
Geneva, 3 July 2006**

Mr. Deputy Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ministers,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you to the opening of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

This year's substantive session is the first following the 2005 World Summit. Our Leaders at the Summit unequivocally reaffirmed their determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Summit marked a significant advance for the cause of development. It triggered positive steps on aid, debt relief and other matters that we had been seeking for many years. It also triggered the pledge to adopt, no later than the end of this year, comprehensive national development strategies for achieving the agreed objectives. The challenge now is delivering on the timely implementation of these key commitments.

Of course, we can only succeed in this endeavour if we work in partnerships. No country, and no single actor, can take on this challenge alone. The United Nations, as a symbol of multilateralism and champion of the global partnership for development, can support Governments in their efforts and will do so even more effectively once strengthened and reformed as agreed at the Summit.

The Council, as the UN's principal body for promoting economic and social development and ensuring policy coherence, is well placed to advance integration and coordination of efforts towards the implementation of the development agenda. Its new functions, notably the *Annual Ministerial Review*, the biennial *Development Cooperation Forum*, response to humanitarian *emergencies* and post-conflict *peace-building* can become instrumental to our success in this regard.

First, by bringing together policymakers to engage in a comprehensive assessment of progress, the Ministerial Review will help ensure that all actors are working in sync to improve the lot of billions of people. As I see it, the Review would encompass three elements: a snapshot of global progress on the agenda; a thematic assessment; and voluntary national presentations that would share best practices and lessons learned. I understand that so far developing countries have volunteered for the latter, donor countries should also consider stepping forward.

Second, I see the Forum as a major leap forward in enhancing the impact of diverse efforts in the pursuit of the global development agenda. It provides ECOSOC with a unique space to promote more effective alignment between the global development cooperation system and the realization of the development agenda. The DCF is the only multilateral forum that can bring together all the major stakeholders to engage in a dialogue on the coherence of the international development cooperation architecture, as well as the performance of the full range of development actors, and the overall flow of resources.

Third, in order to promote an improved and coordinated action from the United Nations in response to natural and humanitarian disasters, we need to establish how ECOSOC can best provide some value added to the ongoing activities of the UN. The special events of the Council on "The Avian Flu" and the "Food Crises in Africa" have shown that ECOSOC can play a useful role in raising awareness of forgotten and looming crises.

Fourth, with its Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Haiti the Council has demonstrated that it is a unique forum to promote an integrated approach to the issues of post-conflict peace-building. We now need to ensure continuous engagement between ECOSOC and the Peace-building Commission. This is essential so the two bodies can combine their valuable expertise to focus attention on reconstruction and institution-building, help ensure predictable funding and keep the international community engaged in the long-term recovery effort.

It is critical for the success of these new functions of the Council that all stakeholders actively engage in their preparations, as well as the events themselves. Even more urgent, we must rapidly agree on the modalities for their implementation, so that ECOSOC can effectively perform them starting next year.

Distinguished delegates,

At the Summit, our Leaders also recognized the crucial link between employment and poverty reduction, gender equality and social integration. Therefore, they resolved “to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all (...) a central objective of [their] relevant national and international policies.”

This was a remarkable political achievement: in the context of the shifting competitive pressures and opportunities created by globalization, the employment challenge is as crucial for developing and transition countries as for developed ones. It also places a great responsibility on individual Governments and the international community, including the multilateral system.

We must now respond in an effective and innovative manner to the high expectations that have been raised by the Summit, by making decent work a global objective and a national reality. The recognition of the centrality of decent employment in economic and social policy must be followed by the determination to act accordingly,

with effective and concrete strategies at the national and the international level to achieve the employment related goals.

To address this very timely theme of the Council's high-level segment, we have with us today key policymakers from Governments, international organizations and regional institutions, as well as from civil society and the private sector. Let us seize this occasion for coming up with concrete initiatives, ideas and recommendations that have a real impact on our peoples.