

Check against delivery

**Opening statement of H.E. Mr. Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations
and President of the Economic and Social Council**

**Economic and Social Council, Special High-Level Meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO
and UNCTAD**

**United Nations Headquarters,
New York, 16 April**

Excellencies,
Secretary-General,
President of General Assembly,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the tenth Special High-Level Meeting of ECOSOC with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organisation, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

I would like to extend my special welcome to Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations and Madam Al Khalifa, President of the General Assembly, as well as Ministers and senior representatives from Member States and the institutional stakeholders of this meeting.

This year we have the distinctive honour of having with us seven former ECOSOC Presidents. Their work over the past years has been instrumental in shaping ECOSOC as it is now, and I wish to warmly thank them for joining us today.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today marks the tenth anniversary of the “Spring Meetings.” In the last decade, this meeting has evolved in many ways. In the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the first meeting held in April 1998 served as a forum for addressing such crises through coordinated multilateral actions in the areas of

development, finance and trade. The meeting served as a unique forum for building a stronger relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organisation. It also helped in paving the way for a successful outcome of the Monterrey Conference on Financing of Development.

Following the FFD conference in 2002, the Spring Meetings have provided an important channel for dialogue between the Council and the intergovernmental bodies of the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD on the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

This year, the sub-themes selected for our discussion -- governance at all levels; voice and participation of developing countries; trade and investment policies; and aid effectiveness and innovative financing -- lie at the very heart of the Monterrey Consensus. Progress in each of these areas will be essential to meet the Millennium Development Goals which remain our common aspiration.

While these goals are shared by all, the results on the ground often fall short of our expectations. To address this challenge, a central task is to ensure that the opportunities opened by robust economic growth and expanding global integration translate into tangible progress in achieving the development goals. What this would entail is coherence, consistency and coordination in policies that have direct or indirect bearing on the realization of these goals. To this end, the Economic and Social Council can play a crucial role. To realize this potential, we need to focus on four aspects of the work of the Council.

First, the 2005 World Summit Heads of State and Government mandated the Council to hold an Annual Ministerial Review to evaluate the progress made towards the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The first Review, which will take place at the upcoming substantive session in Geneva in July, will provide an important opportunity for Member States to exchange lessons learned and to identify best practices which merit wider application and scaling-up. This would offer an opportunity to galvanize the national and international efforts for making this happen.

Second, the Development Cooperation Forum, another function mandated by the 2005 World Summit, provides a platform for ensuring that our efforts to support countries in their endeavours to achieve these goals are well coordinated and make optimal impact. We must work together to ensure that this Forum delivers on its promise. I invite all major stakeholders to actively engage in the launching of the Development Cooperation Forum in July this year.

Third, efforts to achieve individual internationally agreed development goals must be underpinned by a continued commitment of all to global partnership for development. Given the linkage between the achievement

of the United Nations development agenda and the global partnership for development, we might wish to consider in future how to relate the Spring Meeting deliberations on the Monterrey Consensus to the theme of the Annual Review and to the work of the biennial DCF.

Finally, I believe that the 2008 Financing for Development Review presents us with an excellent opportunity to reinforce efforts to implement the Monterrey Consensus. I would like to encourage you to consider how the next year's Spring Meeting could contribute to the 2008 FFD review. One option could be to constitute a Joint Ministerial Group to prepare concrete proposals for consideration at the 2008 Spring Meeting. The recommendations of the group, based on a critical evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the Monterrey conference, could serve as a basis for our discussion at the 2008 "Spring Meeting".

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges of development remain daunting. Solutions cannot be found through individual or piecemeal approaches. We need to join forces to fight poverty and hunger, and to avert the impending threats posed by climate change and various other problems that defy boundaries and borders. We need all our solidarity, conviction and determination to make the UN development agenda a reality and ECOSOC a truly global forum for our joint efforts. Let's hope that at the twentieth anniversary of this meeting, our successors will not have to make such appeals.

With these words, I would now like to invite the Secretary-General. Mr. Ban, you have the floor, Sir.