

Check against delivery

**Statement by Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis,
President of the Economic and Social Council**

Agenda items 47 (Integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields), 113 (Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit) and 149 (United Nations reform: measures and proposals)

New York, 6 February 2007

Madame President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank you, Madame President, for convening today's meeting and inviting me to this debate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. This debate will certainly help to point the way forward on how best to improve the contributions of different United Nations bodies to the success of the Peacebuilding Commission, in line with their specific competencies and mandates.

The Economic and Social Council welcomes the opportunity to reiterate its commitment to working with the General Assembly and the Security Council in addressing the challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding. Indeed, it may be recalled that it was a request of the General Assembly in its resolution (55/217) for ECOSOC to consider the creation of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict that led to the creation of the advisory groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi. These Groups played a pioneering role in advancing the concept of an integrated approach to peace and development and was a catalyst for addressing the gap in the UN's architecture for dealing with post-conflict countries.

The assignment of this pioneering work by the General Assembly to ECOSOC was based on the recognition that ECOSOC's mandate in the economic, social, and environmental fields enable it to play an important role vis-à-vis countries emerging from conflict by bringing its coordination role and responsibility to bear on peacebuilding and economic and social reconstruction. ECOSOC's oversight role in matters of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance was also considered of particular value in promoting better integration between relevant policy and operational dimensions, thereby complementing ongoing work that was taking place in the General Assembly and the Security Council on advancing the concept of an integrated approach to peacebuilding. ECOSOC's capacities remain valuable and relevant with the advent of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Madame President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The UN Millennium Declaration rightly emphasized the critical role of peace and security for human well-being and for eradicating poverty in all its forms. As I noted in my statement to the Security Council last week, nine out of ten countries with lowest human development indicators have experienced conflict at some point or other since 1990. These countries are clearly the farthest away from achieving the targets and goals set out in the United Nations development agenda. The new roles assigned the 2005 World Summit to ECOSOC to conduct annual ministerial reviews of progress made in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, will strengthen its capacity to contribute in the area of peacebuilding as it will give the Council the opportunity to continually assess how conflict is affecting the implementation of the development agenda, and to review and share lessons learned on how MDG-based strategies can help forestall violent conflict.

The high-level biennial development cooperation forum can also provide a unique opportunity for the Council to examine how development cooperation can best support countries in conflict or emerging from it. The experience of the ad hoc advisory groups, including the group on Haiti, underlines the need to find appropriate mechanisms to promote “good donorship” in countries emerging from conflict to ensure that the population in these countries obtains some tangible dividends of peace. The Council could consider this issue in future development cooperation forums and make its conclusions available to the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission can already now draw on the lessons learned from the experience of the ad hoc advisory groups in the area of resource mobilization as well as other lessons that have been enumerated in reports of the Secretary General on the assessment of the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups.

In the spirit of sharing, ECOSOC would also be interested in the results of the “lessons learned” that Commission will be compiling as a way of helping the Council to consider and follow-up the Commission’s recommendations. These lessons learned could also be disseminated through ECOSOC’s subsidiary machinery and the networks of NGOs in consultative status with the Council to a wider audience.

Madame President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Council is greatly encouraged by the emerging consensus that interaction between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council would enhance the effective functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council is ready to explore practical modalities for interaction between ECOSOC and the PBC, in line with General Assembly resolutions 60/180 on the establishment of the Commission and 61/16 on ECOSOC reform.

Our common objective should be to mobilize the whole institutional machinery of the United Nations to promote a wide array of policy approaches and best practices to develop answers to the complex and difficult needs of post-conflict countries and prevent their relapse into conflict. The meeting today, Madame President, will contribute to a wider consensus on the direction in which the entire system should go.

On its part, ECOSOC is ready to support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission collectively and through its individual members on the Commission’s Organizational Committee, to develop a viable peacebuilding strategy rooted in integrated policies that promote poverty eradication, sustainable development and human rights. We believe, Madame President, that this approach will prove its lasting added value. I thank you.