



29 October 2007

**Statement by the President of the Economic and Social Council
to the General Assembly on the introduction of the report of the
Economic and Social Council for 2007**

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to introduce the 2007 report of the Economic and Social Council.

This year's substantive session was an important landmark in the work of the Council. It laid the foundation for a renewed ECOSOC. By implementing the vision of the 2005 World Summit, this session opened new avenues for the future of the Council, particularly, the Annual Ministerial Review and the launch of the biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

I will briefly highlight some of the key outcomes of this session and then focus on the future, including the issue of next steps.

This year's **Special High-Level Meeting** of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD initiated preparations for a follow-up of the international conference on Financing for Development to review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha, Qatar, in the second half of 2008. This meeting represents the centerpiece of our dialogue on the global partnership for development.

The first **Annual Ministerial Review** exceeded all expectations. It provided focus and concrete content to the discussion of policies and means required to improve and accelerate implementation of MDG 1 and 8 -- eradication of poverty and hunger through the global partnership for development. I hope the Assembly could draw upon the work of the Council for the specific meeting focused on development, as decided by UNGA resolution 60/265.

The high point of the Review was, in my view, the **National Voluntary Presentations** by the Ministers of six developing countries- Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, and Ghana, which became an occasion for peer review, knowledge sharing and information exchange.

From them, five key policy messages emerged. First, national development strategies are working but not at the pace required. We need to accelerate and scale-up the implementation process. Second, the global partnership should be made more effective in all its dimensions. Third, the global economic environment should be made pro-development and pro-poor. Fourth, monitoring the implementation of commitments and accountability should be strengthened. Finally, emerging threats -- like climate change and desertification -- that hamper efforts to realize these goals, should be addressed urgently.

The high number of countries that have volunteered to be reviewed by the Council next year -- including many developed countries -- highlights the Council's role as a convener and the central forum for review

of global development goals. Next year's presentations should be a further step forward as the Council would be undertaking a review of countries at different stages of development and different perspectives.

We also had a very stimulating dialogue at the launch of the **biennial Development Cooperation Forum**, -- a unique global platform where *all* actors engaged in a dialogue on key policy issues affecting development cooperation, which included issues like the quantity, quality and impact of aid and aid coordination. The task of the 2008 Forum will be to offer strong analysis and provide guidance how development cooperation can best support the IADGs (internationally agreed development goals).

The **Ministerial Declaration**, adopted by consensus, sends an important message that the international community is united in dealing with the obstacles and challenges in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly MDG-1.

The practical dimension of "partnerships" was illustrated at the first-ever **Innovation Fair** where a dozen UN-system organizations, several NGOs and private sector entities showcased their products and projects for the reduction of hunger, malnutrition and poverty. Innovation Fairs are expected to serve as the hub for promoting and catalyzing tangible, multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementing the UN development agenda.

The deliberations on the theme of strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macro-economic policies highlighted five key policy messages. Firstly, the link between economic growth and poverty reduction is complex and there is a need for further study, including their relation with equity. Second, there is need for broad-based macroeconomic policies, which should be formulated in the framework of a national development strategy. Third, some national policies have spillover effects to other countries, while the external conditions affect national economies. Fourth, there is a need to increase the voice and participation of developing countries in international decision-making. Finally, international regimes that had developed without much participation of developing countries need to be reviewed and reassessed.

The Council's **coordination segment** showed that the 2006 Ministerial Declaration has mobilized the UN system and governments in making employment and decent work a central objective of their policies and activities. This augurs well for strengthening linkages between the high-level and coordination segments of the Council in order to translate its normative work into practical implementation.

During the **humanitarian affairs segment**, the Council gave guidance on how to strengthen the coordination of the humanitarian system of the UN. It highlighted the need for capacity-building of national, local and regional organizations; broader partnerships among humanitarian organizations; and the need to improve humanitarian stand-by capacities, including with the private sector. Many proposed that ECOSOC should become a more active body by convening ad hoc meetings on humanitarian emergencies. I believe that this collective thinking should be put into action in line with General Assembly resolution 61/16.

The Council's work on the **operational activities** for development was of special significance. A number of themes emerged in the discussions on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR), which have informed your debates over the past days. These include the importance of national ownership and leadership of UN operational activities; the need for increased and more stable and predictable core and non-core resources, the significance of support by the UN system in countries in transition from relief to development and better coordination with peacebuilding efforts. Also, the need for greater coordination and coherence of the UN system at country level was highlighted.

In the **general segment**, the Council focused among other issues on consolidating and coordinating the work of its subsidiary bodies. The Council's role in this area is becoming all the more important as we proceed to implement the UN development agenda in a unified and effective way.

Many other outcomes of the Council are of key relevance to the work of the General Assembly – such as on **human rights, social development, gender mainstreaming**, to mention only a few. They will help, I am sure, the second and third committees in their work.

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me to share with you what I see as the next areas for the Council where we need to mobilize our efforts to achieve the goals of the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

The 2005 World Summit rightly highlighted the linkages between peace, development and human rights, and the need for multi-dimensional strategies. Nine out of ten countries with lowest human development indicators have experienced conflict at some point since 1990. These countries are clearly very far from achieving the targets and goals set out in the UN development agenda.

The new role assigned to ECOSOC to conduct Annual Ministerial Reviews will hopefully strengthen its capacity to contribute in the area of peacebuilding. This 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 development 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 seeking to emerge from conflict.

The agreement to extend the ECOSOC 's Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Haiti is a clear recognition of the useful contribution the Council can make to the long-term development of such countries. The lessons learned from these Groups could contribute to enriching the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. I will work with members of the Bureau in further strengthening the ties between the relevant bodies.

ECOSOC has unique Charter-based tasks to promote stronger, coordinated responses from UN system and other partners to humanitarian crises. It can also help to ensure equal focus on investing in mitigation and development processes, which reduce the vulnerability of those most at risk. The Council has been asked by the 2005 World Summit to play a role in monitoring a coherent international response. In recent years, it has undertaken this role by convening emergency sessions aimed at strengthening the coordination of the emergency humanitarian system of the UN. I believe time has come to adopt a regular practice for turning to the Council whenever major humanitarian emergencies occur. This would be a step towards the implementation of its mandate to address such situations.

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,

In conclusion, a more substantive and interactive relation is developing between the Assembly and the Council. This relationship should help in providing practical orientation to the international community in the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome. My experience as President of ECOSOC has shown me the potential of ECOSOC in meeting many of the core concerns of the international community. The convening power and the spirit of engagement that have been the hallmark of the UN conferences are captured in ECOSOC. This inclusive spirit of UN international conferences permeated this year's session of the Council.

This is a time of great change. New forms of international cooperation are emerging and new institutional arrangements are being put in place in the effort to eradicate poverty, protect people from disasters and protect our environment, especially address climate change. This is also a time of high expectations: despite important gains in standards of living, there remain tremendous challenge of poverty and hunger, especially in Africa. We must get development right for world's people.

Thank you.