



Check against delivery

Closing Remarks

by

**H.E. Ambassador Hamidon Ali (Malaysia),
President of the Economic and Social Council
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Mr. Under-Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been an honour and a privilege for me to preside over this pivotal session of the Economic and Social Council. I thank all of you for your hard work and collaborative spirit. My special gratitude goes to the Vice-Presidents of the Council. I would like specifically to thank the many colleagues who have skilfully facilitated agreements on the Ministerial Declaration and other resolutions. My deep thanks also to the Secretariat who have tirelessly supported our work.

It was a groundbreaking session. This session held the second Development Cooperation Forum and a record number of National Voluntary Presentations. The adoption of the Ministerial Declaration coincided with the establishment of the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Declaration and our deliberations in the substantive session are important building blocks for a successful MDG Summit in

September. I intend to convey the range of ideas that have emerged from the various segments to the President of the General Assembly, as background for deliberations of the Summit.

The Council has made a strong contribution to making 2010 a watershed year for women through its Annual Ministerial Review. A key message emanating from the High-level segment is that gender equality and the empowerment of women sit squarely at the heart of development and peace worldwide, and that the international community must remain fully committed to these efforts. The Ministerial Declaration is an action-oriented document focused on progress, challenges and implementation gaps, identifying strategies to effectively implement international commitments on gender equality.

I wish to congratulate the 13 countries that made National Voluntary presentations. You have demonstrated that national-level experiences, with their own unique sets of development imperatives, are instrumental to the overall success of global development priorities. National efforts require multi-stakeholder collaboration, witnessed in some instances by national civil society participation and the contribution of development partners, culminating in a rich review dialogue in this forum. I was particularly heartened by the sincerity and transparency of the presentations, which shared successful policies and lessons learned and identified gaps and challenges for the benefit of others.

It is amidst a difficult and complex economic and financial climate that the second Development Cooperation Forum was held this year. The Forum featured groundbreaking discussions and unprecedented participation from multi-stakeholder groups. The Forum, in my view, has successfully established itself as one of the primary arenas for global dialogue and policy review of the effectiveness and coherence of international development cooperation. The evidence shows that despite the dramatically changed global economic landscape, official development assistance (ODA) and other development financing are essential in ensuring progress towards attaining the Goals, now more than ever.

In my view, the Development Cooperation Forum is now appropriately positioned to play an enhanced role in follow up to the September Summit and in the lead up to 2015. It is my strong recommendation that we focus on deepening the role of the Forum when we review General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, during the 65th session of the General Assembly.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

With only five years remaining to achieve the MDGs, the need for accelerating progress in health was voiced by many Governments and experts during this year's Coordination segment. In this connection, support was expressed for the Secretary-General's Joint Action Plan to improve the health of women and children.

We have witnessed significant participation by Governments, civil society representatives and senior officials of the UN system, and the Council was able to have a brief dialogue on the CEB. I am very pleased that the Council adopted a resolution on the role of the UN system in implementing the 2009 Ministerial Declaration on global public health and I look forward to its implementation.

On the Operational Activities segment, inter-active dialogues with the Executive Heads of the UN funds and programmes, with senior authorities from programme countries and with key interlocutors of the UN development system were most stimulating and served to enrich the perspectives of delegations on the relevance of the Council's work to the country level. I was particularly pleased to learn that the UN system remains a trusted partner for developing countries in the area of capacity development. The resolution adopted by the Council complements directions from General Assembly resolution 62/289 on system-wide coherence, by promoting the full implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities between now and the next comprehensive review in 2012. It applies particularly to assuring the quality of the work of the UN development system at country level; the use of national expertise and capacities; and the continued pursuit of efficiency measures.

Turning attention to the Humanitarian segment, Member States' decision to focus on the complex issues of 'operating in high-risk environments' and 'vulnerability and humanitarian response' has amplified the importance of the issues addressed in this segment of our work.

Both panels provided an opportunity for an urgent debate on how to maintain humanitarian operations in insecure and high-risk environments and on issues such as extreme and chronic vulnerability, and the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian and development actors. Threats facing humanitarian operations and measures that could be taken to mitigate them were ventilated and identified, such as remote programming, improved information sharing among humanitarian organisations and with national authorities and sustained dialogue with all stakeholders including non-state actors.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As I remarked in my welcome address to the Joint Special Event of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission, I am pleased that efforts to strengthen the interaction and the institutional links between the two bodies are starting to bear fruit. Our very fruitful dialogue on the crucial issues of how to achieve the MDGs in countries emerging from conflict, including in youth employment, underscore the importance of a targeted approach to collaboration between the Council and the PBC.

We have also heard that countries emerging from conflict face risks that stretch beyond their capacity. Official Development Assistance is crucial for complementing national budgets and mobilizing resources from other actors. We have heard, too, that the UN system entities working on the ground need to do more to support countries emerging from conflict. Ambassador Wittig and I intend to offer a "Co-Chairs Summary" to the MDG Summit Co-facilitators for their consideration, in the hope that it will help in raising awareness of the special challenges for this group of countries in achieving the MDGs.

I would also like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to the membership for living up to the promise that we intend to stand by Haiti. Subsequent to the Special Event of the Council on Haiti just prior to the opening of the Segment, we had the opportunity to address the special challenges of the transition from recovery to development, following the devastating earthquake on 12 January 2010. We also heard recommendations from the Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, based on the Group's visit to the country last month. You have heard my call and that of Haiti, for a more strengthened role of the Council given the immensity of the tasks ahead and the enormous difficulties faced on the ground and agreed to extend the mandate of the Group to two years, with close follow up. I thank you for your support.

We have already set in motion preparations for the next Annual Ministerial Review, which will focus on education. As we all know, education is fundamental to the economic and social development of societies, and interlinks strongly with the sustainability of our planet in the long-run. The past years' AMRs have demonstrated that no true progress is achievable in any field – including gender equality, global public health, sustainable development and poverty eradication – without the clear inclusion of education in an action agenda. I consider next year's AMR to be a crucial element in building our shared knowledge of development imperatives, and we must ensure that the recommendations of the previous years AMRs will be carried through to next year.

Finally, I am once again very encouraged by the enthusiasm shown for the National Voluntary Presentations. I would like to thank those 13 countries for their initiative in volunteering for 2011. I invite all of you to engage in next year's Council session, including NVPs, with the same enthusiasm and commitment that you have done this year, and to bring this message to your respective capitals in order to engage even larger constituencies in 2011.

I look forward to continue working with you towards the achievement of our common goals.

Thank you very much.