



Check against delivery

**Statement of H.E. Ambassador Hamidon Ali
President of Economic and Social Council
Introduction of the Report of the Economic and Social Council for 2010 (A/65/3)**

New York, 20 October 2010

Mr. President. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to introduce the 2010 report of the Economic and Social Council, contained in document A/65/3.

The Council's work for this year should be seen in the context of the overall effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which culminated with the MDG Summit this September, shortly after the substantive session of ECOSOC. Last month, some 89 Heads of State and Government adopted a collective roadmap towards the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

With the multiple crises - food, energy, climate, financial and economic, exposing the weaknesses in our international financial and economic system and economic recovery still faltering, the Summit sent a clear message that Member States remain fully committed to the Goals set ten years ago. The outcome of the Summit also identified the continuing role of ECOSOC in its follow-up.

Mr. President,

I would like to take this opportunity to first reflect on the outcomes of the Council's work in this context and then turn to areas for future action.

The 2010 Annual Ministerial Review focused on gender equality and empowerment of women. The Review confirmed that both issues sit squarely at the heart of development and peace worldwide. Further, the Review coincided with the establishment of the UN Women entity.

In this regard, the 13 countries that gave National Voluntary Presentations (NVPs) provided rich information on success factors and experiences at the country level. NVPs have grown into a vital lessons-learned platform, characterized by sincere and transparent presentations, which share successful policies and identified challenges for the benefit of others.

The Ministerial Declaration adopted at the close of the HLS, serves as a pivotal action point on progress, challenges and implementation gaps. It identifies strategies to effectively implement international commitments on gender equality and opens new windows of collaborative actions, partnerships and engagement of new and diverse stakeholders. The declaration served as a useful source for agreement on the MDG Outcome document on issues of gender equality and empowerment.

The impact and visibility of the Substantive Segment were further enhanced by an extensive series of side events on a range of cross-cutting themes related to gender equality and women's empowerment. These were organized by Member States, entities of the UN system, and non-governmental stakeholders. Together, these activities served as the Council's hub for promoting and catalyzing tangible, multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementing the UN development agenda. The prevailing complex economic and financial climate gave special relevance to ECOSOC's second Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). The Forum's interactive policy dialogues produced action oriented policy messages on changes in the development cooperation architecture, aid allocation and effectiveness, and policy coherence. The DCF also sent a clear political message to the GA's High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs on the importance of sustaining and improving development cooperation against the backdrop of the crises.

As a global, independent platform, the DCF was encouraged to engage more countries and stakeholders in discussions on aid effectiveness and mutual accountability and to promote more balanced aid relationships with more robust government systems to manage aid funds. The meeting underscored that policies of developed countries need to be coherent with development objectives. At the same time, the catalytic role of aid in increasing other sources of development finance was emphasized.

The deliberations called for greater political momentum and a focus on turning pledges into implementation. It was also felt that the aid effectiveness agenda should be broadened to include concerns such as conditionality or flexibility to combat exogenous shocks. On South-South cooperation, a variety of positive experiences were shared. Overall, there was unprecedented participation from relevant development cooperation actors, including national governments, parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and local government. I remain convinced that the DCF should be annualized to fulfill expectations as a forum to keep development cooperation under review.

This year, the Coordination Segment proved to be a rich source of ideas and elements for the High-level Plenary Meeting on Millennium Development Goals, in particular, on the health-related MDGs and on the MDG 8 on global partnership. There was strong support for accelerating progress for achieving the targets for women and children and the Council gave impetus to the Secretary General's Action Plan on Women and Children which was launched during the MDG Summit.

The 2010 Operational Activities Segment was a rallying call for the UN system to gear up towards the next comprehensive policy review in 2012. The Council made a successful attempt to strengthen the participation of national policy-makers in this segment. The debates with a strong focus on country-level realities provided a compass for the preparations of the next Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities (QCPR) in 2012. There were also broad calls on the UN system to maintain a "spirit of reform" following the system-wide coherence process, by continuing the pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency at country-level.

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" amplified the importance of these issues to our work.

Overall, it was heartening to witness significant participation by Governments, the global civil society network and senior officials of the UN system. Moreover, the number of NGOs that made oral presentations through DESA's new online system has doubled and the submission of written statements has tripled.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am also pleased to report that significant progress has been made in strengthening the Council's work in the area of peace and development. In this regard, the Special Policy Dialogue on "the role of women in countries in special situations" and the joint special event of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission, on peacebuilding and the MDGs held during the substantive session, attracted widespread support and interest.

Haiti remains a focus of the work of the Council. ECOSOC remains committed to ensuring that Haiti recovers from this humanitarian disaster and resumes its path to longer-term development. As an expression of that commitment, Council Members have extended the mandate of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti for two years and asked the Group to report on its activities twice per year. I believe that a more focused programme of activities by the Group, in close collaboration with the UN system and in support a Haitian-led recovery process will go a long way in helping the recovery. The determination of the international community to deliver on their commitments will be paramount.

The Council looks forward to your review of the strengthening of ECOSOC during the current session to see how ECOSOC's role could be further enhanced. Most importantly, in regard to the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), assessing the progress made in the implementation of the UN Development Agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), reviewing trends and progress in international development cooperation. You will also have an opportunity to consider how to strengthen ECOSOC's link with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and ad-hoc meetings on humanitarian emergencies as and when they are requested.

Looking ahead, 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 year's 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.

I urge you all to engage fully in the national, regional and global preparatory activities to set the stage for a successful and path-breaking session next year. Building on our progress and defining new actions informs the spirit with which the Council embraces its work.

Thank you.