



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. LAZAROUS KAPAMBWE

**CLOSING OF SUBSTANTIVE SESSION
OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

29 JULY 2011, GENEVA

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

As we come to the close of the 2011 substantive session of ECOSOC, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you, Member States, the Ministers who travelled from capitals; civil society organizations; inter-governmental bodies; the private sector and the panelists; special guests and experts. The success of this session is a result of the active participation of all of you.

I also wish to thank the members of the ECOSOC Bureau – the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh to the UN and Vice-President representing Asia; the Permanent Representative of Belgium and Vice-President representing Western Europe and Others; the Permanent Representative of Peru and Vice-President representing Latin America and the Caribbean; and the Permanent Representative of Slovakia and Vice-President representing Eastern European States. They worked hard in coordinating preparations for the different segments and chairing discussions of these segments during the substantive session. They have also greatly assisted me ever since our election in January.

A special word of thanks to the Hon. Minister of Education of Bangladesh and the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Estonia to the UN Office at Geneva who were kind enough to chair some meetings on behalf of the substantive Vice-Presidents from their respective countries and regions.

If things have appeared calm on the surface it is because we have had a small but dedicated army of staff of the Secretariat who, like geese on Lake Geneva, have been paddling furiously under water - often late into the night, often without much sleep, often without eating – preparing the conference rooms, drafting the documents, editing, translating, cleaning up. The interpreters, having to strain to make sense of what we are saying, in our multitude of languages and accents. To all of you, on behalf of the Council, I say, “Thank You !”.

I want to take a moment to pay special tribute to Mr. Nikhil Seth, the Director of ECOSOC Support Services who will be leaving to head the Division on Sustainable Development within DESA. Mr. Seth has given invaluable service and institutional memory to ECOSOC,

the Bureau and the Presidents. On behalf of the Council, I thank him most sincerely and wish him success in his new assignment.

In the period we have been meeting here in Geneva, big events have happened: the tragedy in Norway, the train accident in China, the plane crash in Morocco, the severe drought in the Horn of Africa and the road accident two days ago in my own country, Zambia, in which more than 34 people died. Our sympathies and condolences to the families and governments of these countries. On a positive note, Italy has been marking 150 years of Unity and South Sudan became independent and was admitted as the 193rd member of our UN family. Our sincere congratulations to these two countries.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We held this substantive session under the theme ***“Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education”*** to underscore the importance of education to the attainment of all millennium development goals, and to the sustainable existence of humanity and the environment. In this regard, we addressed issues of access to education, particularly of the girl child: the quality of education; the partnerships and financing needed; the need to ensure that education equips our youth with skills needed by our economies and the jobs markets; and we shared best practices and experiences through the National Voluntary Presentations. These and other important messages are contained in the Ministerial Declaration we adopted during the High Level segment of this session.

We were all impressed by the manner in which the Coordination Segment addressed the follow-up to last year’s Ministerial Declaration. Clearly, the UN system has rallied behind UN Women’s leadership in this area.

At the Operational Activities Segment, Member States gave clear directions on what they would like the General Assembly to focus on, when it conducts its Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system Operational Activities in 2012 (the QCPR).

The QCPR will be the opportunity to reflect on how the UN system should respond to changes in the development cooperation landscape – such as the looming economic difficulties, the rise of new development cooperation actors and the ever growing focus on achieving results.

The Council also underscored that the UN system needs to respond fast and flexibly to the needs of LDCs and countries recovering from or in conflict, as well as middle income countries. Our dialogues with the Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Committee for Development Policy augur well for the future coherence of our work.

We have agreed on the follow up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries by adopting a resolution including the review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the 2015 Annual Ministerial Review. The DCF will also take this matter into consideration when it reviews trends in international development cooperation, as well as policy coherence for development.

At the Humanitarian Affairs and General Segments, we were reminded that crises demand not only strong financial partnerships to keep resources flowing, but also fast and nimble response capabilities. We took the opportunity to discuss the drought in the Horn of Africa and conflict in Somalia, as well as how we can assist in promoting dialogue on nation building in South Sudan. On Haiti, the Council reviewed the report of its Ad Hoc Advisory Group, which includes a series of recommendations on aid effectiveness for reconstruction and long term development. The work of the Haiti Group is very timely given the need to maintain a high level of international support to Haiti.

The Council has also established a new UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management. Technical professionals are no doubt excited about the fact that they will now meet globally and under the umbrella of the United Nations and will be clearly energized. This group will bring together, for the first time at the global level, government experts from all Member States to compile and disseminate best practices and experiences on geospatial information, highly relevant in the context of sustainable development and humanitarian assistance.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We have taken a number of decisions and resolutions at this session, as we always do and are expected to do, during ECOSOC's substantive session. But it would be regrettable if our success is measured by the number of these decisions, or how good many of them are.

The real success of this session should be determined by the extent to which we shall implement these decisions.

It is said that the largest depository of knowledge, wealth and potential in the world is the Cemetery. I do not wish to see ECOSOC, or the UN for that matter, as a competitor with the Cemetery as the depository of the largest body of dead ideas and decisions.

I thank you !