



The President  
of the  
Economic and Social Council

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## **GENERAL PARAMETERS FOR THE 2003 SPRING MEETING BETWEEN ECOSOC, THE B-W INSTITUTIONS AND THE WTO**

### **A. Introduction**

1. This is a final draft of a document that was first considered in an informal consultation of the Economic and Social Council held on 27 November, 2002; in a second revision, on January 22, 2003, and, in a last revision, on January 30. It tries to reflect concerns and observations of ECOSOC members expressed in the aforementioned meetings, and a brain-storming session held on January 24 with a few delegates who had expressed a special interest in the topic. The purpose of the Memorandum is to offer the Council's perspective regarding the content, nature, scope and format of this year's spring meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

### **B. Background**

2. Paragraph 69 of the Monterrey Consensus states, among other aspects, that:

“Interactions between representatives of the Economic and Social Council and the directors of the executive boards of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund can serve as preliminary exchanges on matters related to follow-up to the Conference and preparations for the annual spring meeting between those institutions. Similar interactions can also be initiated with representatives of the appropriate intergovernmental body of the World Trade Organization.”

3. The same paragraph goes on to state:

“We encourage the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, with the World Trade Organization, to address issues of coherence, coordination and cooperation, as a follow-up to the Conference, at the spring meeting between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions. The meeting should include an intergovernmental segment to address an agenda agreed to by the participating organizations, as well as a dialogue with civil society and the private sector.”

4. As an additional element to be taken into account, the Economic and Social Council decided, in its resolution E/2002/34, adopted on July 26, 2002, to:

“...make full use of the dialogue that takes place during its annual spring meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization to address, in addition to general matters of common interest, the issues of coherence, coordination and cooperation related to the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, and in that regard:

- (a) *Underlines* the need for a well-prepared and focused agenda for a meeting geared to advancing implementation, as well as examining further steps to be taken by each of the stakeholders to move the Monterrey process forward;
- (b) *Recommends* that the agenda reflect the holistic approach to the interconnected national, regional, international and systemic challenges of financing for development;
- (c) *Decides* to invite all institutional stakeholders to provide the Secretary-General with interim reports during the first quarter of 2003 on the work undertaken and planned in their respective areas of competence regarding implementation of the different components of the Monterrey Consensus, with the understanding that those reports will be essential inputs to the preparation of the meeting;
- (d) *Stresses* the need for continued contacts between representatives of the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, both at the intergovernmental level and at the level of management/secretariats.”

5. Another important element that should be recalled builds on one of the most successful aspects of the Monterrey Summit, which is described in paragraph 68 of the Consensus as “...continuing to build bridges between development, finance, and trade organizations and initiatives, within the framework of the holistic agenda of the Conference.” Those bridges bring together multilateral institutions, but also national actors with different responsibilities, including Ministries of Finance, Trade, Planning, and External Affairs. ECOSOC’s spring meeting is uniquely qualified to offer this ingredient; it is only further enriched by the presence of non-State actors.

6. In addition, during the regular session of the General Assembly last fall, several resolutions were passed which will have a bearing on ECOSOC’s spring meeting. Among these, mention should be made of A/57/250 (high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership), A/57/273 (effective secretariat support for sustained follow-up to the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development), and A/57/272 (high-level intergovernmental consideration of financing for development). Paragraph 21 of the latter states:

“*Decides* that the preparatory work and reports of the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, as well as the preparatory process of the General Assembly high-level dialogue, should serve as inputs in the preparation of the comprehensive report, which would be submitted on an annual basis to the General Assembly, under the agenda item on follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, as well as to the biennial high-level dialogue of the General Assembly.”

7. Finally, GA resolution A/57/250 offers further guidelines in a preambular paragraph when it stresses the importance of:

“Substantively connecting, in ascending series, the spring meeting between the Economic and Social Council, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, which will address the issue of coherence, coordination and cooperation, and the reconstituted high-level dialogue in the General Assembly that will serve as the focal point for the Conference follow-up and that will include a policy dialogue on the implementation of the results of the Conference, including the theme

of coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development.

### C. On matters of substance

8. The spring meeting will take place almost exactly one year after the celebration of the International Conference on Financing for Development (18-22 March 2002, held in Monterrey, Mexico). This, then, will mark the first opportunity to hold a dialogue between the United Nations (represented by ECOSOC), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. The question that immediately comes to mind refers to the most appropriate subject matter of the dialogue. The points of reference to be taken into account to respond to such a question include not only the past legislation and guidelines, referred to above, but also the content, scope, format and outcome of the high-level dialogue of the General Assembly that will serve as a focal point for the Conference follow-up.

9. As mentioned previously, both the Monterrey Consensus and the ECOSOC resolution place issues of coherence, coordination and cooperation related to the follow-up as the center-pieces of the discussion. This would be consistent with the general thrust of previous spring gatherings, where coherence, coordination and cooperation have been the generic subjects of the dialogue. On this special occasion, the generic subjects would be focused on Financing for Development. A further guideline offered in both inter-governmental mandates is that the agenda reflect the holistic approach to the interconnected national, regional, international and systemic challenges of financing for development, and that it further the goal of “building bridges” between different organizations and initiatives.

10. With these broad parameters to work with, it should not be difficult to structure a focused, meaningful and fruitful discussion in the spring to assess coherence, coordination and cooperation in the application of the leading actions adopted in Monterrey. Perhaps one way to characterize the topic at hand is “Increased coherence, coordination and cooperation for the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus at all levels: a year after Monterrey”.

11. The dialogue would be geared to identifying progress, or the lack thereof, in complying with the commitments contained in the Monterrey Consensus, in each of its six chapters. In those areas where progress has been modest or non-existent, the dialogue would seek to examine further actions and policies required. The discussion can explore actual results in mobilizing resources – domestic and international – and addressing systemic issues as well as the institutional policy response on the part of each of the multilateral stakeholders present.

12. Although the subject matter is wide-ranging, the dialogue need not be limited to a general discussion. Careful preparation of the spring meeting, as well as a suggestive brief Note to be prepared by the Secretariat, can help to shape a focused dialogue. Said Note would draw on the Secretariat’s observations as well as on the submissions of the other multilateral organizations, centering on issues of coherence,

coordination and cooperation at the national, regional, international and systemic levels. Within this general framework, different delegates are of course free to pick up on specific matters of special interest, and even on country-based experiences, especially where issues of coherence, coordination and cooperation are involved.

13. Another important precedent at the disposal of the spring meeting will be found in the *Communiqué* issued by the Development Committee on September 28, 2002, as well as in the documentation prepared by the World Bank and IMF Staff in 2002,<sup>1</sup> and the documents to be prepared for the Committee's meeting to be held on April 13, 2003. This work, together with that of the United Nations General Assembly and further inputs from other multilateral organizations, including the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs (G-24), should all provide important background material for the spring meeting.

14. In order to comply with the mandate contained in paragraph 69 of the Monterrey Consensus regarding civil society and the private sector, the Bureau proposes that the spring meeting be preceded by two hearings: one for representatives of the NGO community, and one for representatives of the business sector.

Members of ECOSOC would be invited to participate in these hearings, the results of which would be introduced into the spring meeting by spokespersons from the NGO community and the business sector.

15. As can be gathered from the above, under the general issues of increased coherence, coordination and cooperation, the accent of the spring meeting would be put on an exchange of views on what has been accomplished as well as on shortfalls, in the mode of an appraisal, with some guidelines offered on how to move forward. Drawing on the spring meeting as one of its inputs, the high-level dialogue of the General Assembly, as the focal point for the general follow-up of the International Conference on Financing for Development, would have as its theme "Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus at all levels, a year after". As stated in GA resolution A/57/250, both meetings should be viewed as part of a continuing process. Both would draw on common Secretariat support, in the understanding that the material available for the spring meeting would serve as an input for the comprehensive report to be presented at the fall meeting.<sup>2</sup>

16. No negotiated outcome document is planned. Rather, a President's Statement would try and reflect the general thrust of the discussions. It is further hoped that the "spirit of Monterrey" can be recaptured in the spring meeting, and contribute to a legacy that will facilitate the organization of the high-level dialogue.

#### D. Format

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1 Progress Report on Implementing the Monterrey Consensus (DC2002-0021/Rev. 1); Recent Trends in the Transfer of Resources to Developing Countries (DC2002-0015); Better Measuring, Monitoring, and Managing for Development Results (DC2002-0019).

2 See especially paragraph 5, 20 and 21 of A/57/250.

17. The other element that is necessary to insure a meaningful, fruitful and focused dialogue refers to the format. The most important single element regarding the format for the spring meeting consists in fomenting an interactive dialogue, and persuading delegations to refrain from prepared formal statements. In the words of the Monterrey Consensus, what is sought is for delegates representing the different stakeholders to truly “engage”.

18. The Bureau is quite flexible as to the precise format that is finally selected, but, in principle, what it would propose is a one-hour plenary session, in which a representative of each of the stakeholders would bring his own institutional perspective to the meeting, highlighting the different stakeholders’ views on developments of the last year and institutional responses to the Monterrey Consensus. Delegates would then proceed to one of four two and a half hour inter-active round tables, each one covering the same agenda matter (in contrast to the possibility of each round table specializing in a specific topic). A limited number of spokespersons for the NGO and business communities would be invited to participate in the round tables. The plenary would resume for a further inter-active two-hour session in the afternoon, to be preceded by reports from the coordinators of the four round tables. A brief wrap-up or concluding session would finalize the dialogue.

#### E. Concluding remarks

19. This Memorandum is intended to clarify the Council’s position prior to the consultations required with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. The Bureau and the secretariat have already initiated very general conversations with the Bretton-Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization, basically through their Representatives in New York. It would now propose a more detailed consultation, based on the points outlined above, with Officials of the Bank, the Fund and the WTO in order to insure that all stakeholders’ points of view are reflected.

20. The Council may wish to hold a final consultation with the inter-governmental bodies of the Bank, the Fund and the WTO prior to the spring meeting, to make sure that all potential participants feel comfortable with the agenda and format. Those consultations can be undertaken either by the Bureau or by an expanded Bureau, in accordance with a decision that the Council can take at an appropriate time, once it receives a report on the results of the consultations contemplated in the previous paragraph.