



## ECOSOC HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 2005

The High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) opened at UN Headquarters in New York on Wednesday, 29 June 2005. The Segment, which took as its theme, "Achieving the internationally agreed development goals," began with opening statements from invited speakers. These were followed by a policy dialogue on current developments in the world economy and international economic cooperation in the context of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the afternoon, eight round table dialogues convened to consider development goals relating to poverty and hunger, health, partnerships and financing, human rights and institutions, national strategies, education, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

### OPENING OF THE SESSION

ECOSOC President Munir Akram (Pakistan) opened the meeting on Wednesday morning, and delegates adopted the agenda (E/2005/100) and programme of work for the session (E/2005/L.9). President Akram highlighted the urgent need to address poverty and other development challenges in order to meet internationally-agreed development goals, and noted the input that key policymakers attending this meeting could provide.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan told delegates that the upcoming UN High-level Plenary – or "2005 World Summit" – in September 2005 offers a "once-in-a-generation opportunity to give a major boost to our efforts to reach the development goals." He expressed hope that others would follow the EU's lead by committing to increase official development assistance (ODA), and applauded the G8's debt relief deal. He said progress must be made simultaneously on three fronts – development, security, and human rights. He suggested that the September Summit was an opportunity to fortify ECOSOC, and drew attention to several proposals in his report, *In Larger Freedom*, including that ECOSOC hold annual ministerial-level implementation assessments and a biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

### "VOICES AGAINST POVERTY" PRESENTATIONS:

Delegates then heard keynote presentations on the theme, "voices against poverty." Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Laureate, identified three steps for advancing development. First, he said development concerns must be better integrated into the international trade regime. Secondly, he called for shifting risks from fluctuating exchange rates to developed countries and for a global reserve reform. Finally, he urged recognition of environmental services performed by developing countries.

Highlighting the role of employment in achieving the MDGs, Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), stated that many people only need a fair chance and a decent job to escape poverty. Lamenting the global job crisis, he urged delegates to use ECOSOC as a forum to address it.

António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, stated that international society still excludes refugees' voices. Highlighting inclusiveness and access as keys to achieving the

MDGs, he also identified the need for conflict prevention and long term post-conflict humanitarian assistance.

**POLICY DIALOGUE ON CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF ACHIEVING THE MDGS:** A number of invited speakers engaged in a high-level policy dialogue on "current developments in the world economy and international economic cooperation in the context of achieving the Millennium Development Goals."

José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, reported on the recent World Economic and Social Survey, and urged ECOSOC to agree on the means to attain the economic growth necessary to achieve the MDGs.

Supachai Panitchpakdi, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), urged conclusion of the Doha Round by the end of 2005. He highlighted the cyclical nature of commodity export expansion, effects of China's emergence in the global economy, potential adverse effects of the US trade deficit and reduction of subsidies and trade barriers.

Jean-Louis Sarbib, Senior Vice President, World Bank, identified five steps towards achieving the MDGs: ensuring country ownership of development efforts; improving the environment for private sector led economic growth; scaling up delivery of human services; dismantling trade barriers; and doubling aid.

Carlos Fortin, Officer-in-Charge of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), asserted the need for creating and implementing nationally-owned development strategies that speed investment and growth and maintaining a balance between national policy and international commitments by all governments.

Reinhard Munzberg, Special Representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to the UN, highlighted problems such as the increasing volatility of oil markets that could potentially affect the global economic balance and achievement of the MDGs. Outlining IMF's efforts for financing low income countries, he noted the importance of debt relief, debt sustainability analysis and the completion of the Doha Round.

**Discussion:** President Akram invited comments and questions. KENYA said the debt problem must be addressed holistically, "once-and-for-all." The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) urged more investment in education to develop human capital, and the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasized health spending. TANZANIA noted supply-side constraints to African exports. Responding to a question from the RUSSIAN FEDERATION about medium-term economic risks, Joseph Stiglitz noted a growing consensus that the global economy may be at risk, and said some policies should be changed now, including the serious imbalances in US macro-economic policy. He added that capital market liberalization had not promoted growth in many countries, and should be re-examined.

GUATEMALA raised concerns about "jobless growth" and SOUTH AFRICA said multi-year planning in developing countries was not always matched by predictability from their partners.



## ROUND TABLE DIALOGUES

On Wednesday afternoon, eight round table dialogues convened. Each included a number of presentations, followed by a discussion period.

**POVERTY AND HUNGER:** Gérard Latortue, Prime Minister of Haiti, chaired this round table. Charlotte McClain-Nhalpo, South African Human Rights Commission/World Bank, emphasized the need to operationalize guidelines on the right to food. Armand De Decker, Minister of Development Cooperation of Belgium, called for an end to conflicts in many southern countries and stressed the need for accountability of countries receiving aid. Participants discussed issues such as: prioritizing agriculture and rural development in national policy; developing non-monetary indicators of poverty; creating policies for food distribution; delivering food aid for those in immediate need; resolving infrastructural issues in agriculture and addressing international trade policies that affect agriculture and food security.

**HEALTH:** This roundtable was chaired by Carin Jämtin, Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden, who stressed that countries are failing to achieve the goals they have agreed. Eugène Camara, Minister of Planning, Guinea, emphasized reproductive health programmes. Thoraya Obaid, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), expressed concern at the absence of political will to address urgent health issues. Joy Phumaphi, WHO, emphasized physical, mental and social well being, and integration of development and health planning. Victor Mari Ortega, UN Joint Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) called for a broad-based, multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS.

Several participants called for universal coverage and equitable access to health services and cheaper medications. Many agreed on the need to scale up and strengthen health systems. They also, *inter alia*, discussed how to prioritize between preventive and curative measures, noted nutrition is an essential part of achieving the MDGs, and highlighted the feminization of HIV/AIDS.

**GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING OF THE MDGS:** Ishrat Hussain, Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, chaired the session. Carlos Fortin, UNCTAD, said debt need not be harmful if it is sustainable. Stephano Manservigi, European Commission, highlighted the need for good governance and additional, effective ODA. José Luis Machinea, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), noted the difficulties most poor countries face in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). Eveline Herfkens, MDG Campaign, said most ODA is not focused on the poor or low income countries, and opposed agriculture subsidies. Reinhard Munzberg, IMF, said countries should determine their own policies and resource allocation. Charles Raymond, CitiGroup Foundation, outlined his Foundation's work on micro-finance to support women's enterprises in developing countries. Melinda Kimble, UN Foundation, highlighted the need for innovative partnerships and energizing the private sector.

In the ensuing discussion, SOUTH AFRICA said it was not enough to focus on conducive environments for FDI in developing countries, and said sources of FDI should also be considered.

**HUMAN RIGHTS, GOVERNANCE, INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RESOURCES:** The round table on "Building State Capacity to Meet the MDGs: Human Rights, Governance, Institutions and Human Resources" was chaired by Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, who emphasized linkages between human rights and the MDGs. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, Minister of Planning and National Development, Kenya, endorsed a "developmental and democratic state." Mehr Williams, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, called for non-discrimination, meaningful participation and accountability, and Rehman Sobhan, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh, highlighted the role of democratization and improving governance in achieving the MDGs. Participants called for: building individual capacity; civic education; multiculturalism; enhancing democracy and Rule of Law; and balancing between the

productive and social sectors. They drew attention to the role of migrants, and to persons with disabilities, rural communities, and other marginalized groups.

**EDUCATION AND LITERACY:** Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia, chaired this roundtable, emphasizing basic literacy, gender inclusiveness and good governance. Peter Smith, UNESCO, called for innovative approaches to education. Geeta Rao Gupta, International Center for Research on Women, lamented that the first MDG deadline on education had been missed. Magdi Mehani Amin, Egypt, said collective action between policy makers, local communities and civil society is critical in achieving educational goals.

Participants emphasized, *inter alia*, the role of technologies in achieving education goals, bringing the marginalized into the mainstream, enhancing gender equality in primary and secondary education, improving adult literacy, and encouraging investment in education.

**GENDER EQUALITY:** Nilofar Bakhtiar, Minister in Charge of Women Development, Pakistan, opened the round table on "gender equality and empowerment of women." Marcela del Mar Suazo Laitano, Minister in Charge of the National Institute of Women of Honduras, highlighted their recently adopted constitutional declaration which aimed to include women in decision making at all levels. Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, emphasized the need to create gender sensitive local governance. Noeleen Hayzer, UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), called for upscaling already existing strategies for women's empowerment. Debbie Budlender, Community Agency for Social Enquiry, South Africa, highlighted the Ugandan experience in creating local-level gender budgets. Participants discussed: country experiences in creating gender equality; implementing gender sensitive policies; achieving the MDGs in conflict areas; and using culture and religion for women's empowerment.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:** The round table on environmental sustainability was chaired by Rogatien Biao, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Benin, who stressed that the MDGs, ecosystems and human well being are intertwined. Klaus Töpfer, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), stated that environmental protection is not just a luxury for the wealthy, and Brigitte Girardin, Acting Minister of Development Cooperation of France, identified environmental degradation as an obstacle to development. UN-HABITAT noted the need to make human settlements sustainable. Participants called for the implementation of the Johannesburg Declaration; discussed the need for, and the possible role of a UN Environment Organization; welcomed UN-HABITAT's work on slums; drew attention to climate change and its impact on agricultural productivity; and discussed environmental services and mainstreaming environment into national policies.

**NATIONAL STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE MDGS:** Carmen Gallarda Hernandez, Permanent Representative of El Salvador, moderated this session. Sidi Ould Didi, Minister of Economic Affairs of Mauritania, noted the need to mobilize political will and world opinion on the MDGs. Masood Ahmed, Department for International Development, UK, endorsed country-specific processes, and opposed imposing solutions on developing countries. He also suggested independent monitoring of implementation.

In the ensuing discussion, several speakers welcomed Masood Ahmed's comments. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY highlighted the need for more and better aid. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC focused on the formulation of strategies and systems for development, highlighting his country's status as a middle-income country. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) stressed that the large population and poverty levels in the Asia-Pacific region means the region needs to receive more attention if the MDGs are to be achieved.