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COSOC News

A - Overview

The **Economic and Social Council** held its 2006 Substantive Session on 3 -28 July 2006 in Geneva.

During its three-day **High-level Segment** which started the session, the issues of full and productive employment and decent work, and its impact on the sustainable development were discussed. A **Ministerial Declaration** was adopted which identified a number of concrete steps for further implementation of the 2005 World Summit to make full and productive employment and decent work a central objective of national and international policies. The Council also held informal discussions on the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum, two new functions that the Council will undertake starting 2007.

In the **Coordination Segment**, participants reviewed the current approaches to economic development and how to translate economic growth into effective social development, including the eradication of hunger and poverty. A special event on **Avian Influenza** was also held, which called for proactive actions in forging more coherent responses to emergencies and crises that require a comprehensive and timely response.

The session continued with the **Operational Activities Segment**, which discussed the role of United Nations development cooperation, in particular the issues of funding, the need

Keynote Addresses on the theme “Working out of Poverty” (3 July 2006)

The High-level Segment began on Monday, 3 July 2006, signaling the start of the

for strengthening South-South cooperation programmes and coherent and effective policy recommendations.

Participants discussed the need for implementation of improved humanitarian responses at all levels during the **Humanitarian Affairs Segment**, including issues related to the transition from relief to development, risk reduction strategies in the recovery process, gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies, and chronically under-funded emergencies.

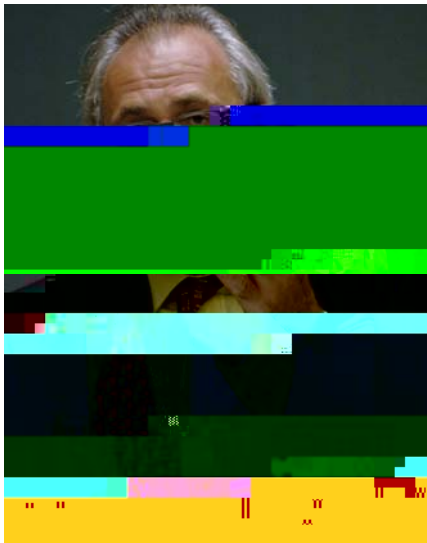
During the **General Segment**, the Council discussed, inter alia, the implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, the ECOSOC Ad Hoc7.2.oco-ups200Guinea-Bateau, Bu.0005 Tc0.0116 Tw{126

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Several dignitaries delivered keynote statements on the theme of “Working out of Poverty.”

In his opening statement, H.E. Mr. Ali Hachani, President of ECOSOC, highlighted the role of ECOSOC in advancing integration and coordination in international economic and social development. He emphasized the importance of partnerships in reducing poverty and ensuring global stability, particularly partnerships between the United Nations system organizations and Member States.



Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, speaking at the opening of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC.

Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, discussed development as a central pillar of the United Nations system and the role of ECOSOC as the United Nations principal body for coordinating and advancing development policies. He noted that:

- €# The Millennium Development Goals present an opportunity for ECOSOC to rally around a concrete set of clear, universally acclaimed and achievable targets;
- €# As a principal organ, the Economic and Social Council has a chance to play a more pivotal role in the daily lives of ordinary people everywhere;

- €# The Council must, as the pending General Assembly resolution envisages, seek to become an intergovernmental lobby for the Millennium Development Goals and the other conference goals;
- €# ECOSOC should be the political and policy-level global forum for tracking progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. A place where ministers commit and are held accountable for action on those commitments.

The Prime Ministers of Pakistan, Norway and Mozambique, the Minister of Labour and Youth Employment of Tunisia, and the Director-General of the International Labour Organization presented a series of keynote statements.

Speakers welcomed the conference as an opportunity to link development policies and employment. They recognized that the **fight against poverty and the promotion of better standards of living** are major challenges facing the world today against the background of the growing imbalance in trade and income distribution. Pointing out that economic growth does not necessarily translate into extended job creation, they addressed the need for coordinated efforts at international level in order to deal with these undesired outcomes of globalisation and to successfully achieve MDGs by 2015.

The participants also reiterated the pivotal role **employment** plays not only in bridging the income gap between the rich and the poor, but also in promoting human rights and security through enhanced social inclusiveness. It was also noted that combating **gender inequality** in job market should be placed on the top of the agenda, given that empowering women and providing equal opportunity is strongly linked to economic empowerment.

Some speakers also underscored the **responsibility of the United Nations**, working as a liaison connecting the international community and developing countries so as to facilitate coordinated efforts and help managing the effective use of resources in this endeavor.

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The following are summaries of the keynote addresses.

H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minis-

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necessarily translate to lower levels of unemployment. Unemployment is based on the quality of growth, specifically within the knowledge-based and the communications sectors. With the UN acting as the liaison between the international community and the developing world, greater cooperation is to be anticipated among various members of the global economy.

Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), welcomed the conference as an opportunity to link development policies to the decent work agenda. The theme of “working out of poverty” is the key to realizing the MDGs and addressing the global jobs crisis. He cited six areas in which to focus effort:

- €# First, value work;
- €# Second, acknowledge the political urgency to act;

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- €# “Expanding decent rural work opportunities: What role can secure land rights play?” (hosted by the International Land Coalition); and
- €# “Gender Dimensions of Labour Migration” (hosted by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women/DESA, IOM and UNFPA).

Simultaneous High-level roundtable dialogues were organized on 5 July 2006. They focused on:

- €# Creating decent work opportunities with productivity growth;
- €# Meeting the challenge of employment creation in Africa and the Least Developed Countries;
- €# Globalization and labour migration; and
- €# Innovation at work: national strategies to achieve gender equality in employment.

For more information, please visit

<http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/hls2006/roundtables.shtml>

General Debate (4 - 5 July 2006)

The general debate of the High-level Segment for the 2006 Substantive Session of ECOSOC was held on 4 – 5 July 2006 in Geneva. Delegations concurred on the need to create an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all. At the international level, issues including trade liberalisation, international migration and rights at work were addressed. At the domestic level, key issues such as employment, gender equality, role of the private sector and social dialogue were discussed.

It was underscored that achieving full **employment** and decent work should be at the centre of development policy discussions. Many delegations asserted the need for incorporating the ILO's Decent Work Programmes, Conventions and Pillars into national development policies, stressed that job creation, flexibility, efficiency and worker security should be

simultaneously addressed and that the gap between rich and poor had to be narrowed, and emphasized the dual challenge of creating new and productive jobs and improving the quality of existing jobs.

Participants also agreed that Governments should focus on mainstreaming labour market policies and measures targeted at **improving the quality of the labour force**. In this context, the international community must develop a coherent macroeconomic framework and national Governments should focus on strengthening institutions and capacity building in improving human capital.

The need of ensuring **gender equality** was also stressed. It was emphasized that institutional and legislative framework for the elimination of all forms of gender-based discrimination, as well as for the productive integration of women and youth into the labour force, should receive priority attention in the national agenda so as to promote social mobility and cohesion.

It was also emphasized that **rights at work** should be recognized and means to enhance the level of worker security be actively sought, gaining the right **balance between the flexibility and security**. Economic growth should be complemented by public policies which could create new quality jobs and enhance social inclusion. Most delegations were of the view that Governments have to deploy more efforts to combat the negative effects of the liberalization process particularly when the economy was passing through transition to market economy and labour market reforms become inevitable.

To this end, it was stressed that social consensus has to be achieved through **social dialogue**. One could not talk about decent work without also talking about decent employers, decent legislation and decent rights. Many aspects of employment security, flexible work, quality of work places and others fell within the competence of social partners, and therefore a common agenda and joint responsibility should be created.

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Most delegations expressed concerns regarding **international migration** in the context of globalization. Several speakers specifically argued that migration leads to the loss of skilled workers by developing countries, as people are compelled to seek better jobs in the developed world. Others stated that migration must be seen as a positive factor in development and one delegation further stressed that studies show labour mobility can actually benefit both host countries and countries of origin. Finally, one participant stressed that while migration is generally viewed as beneficial for promoting fair globalization, illegal migration and human trafficking should be fought through prevention, prosecution and protection.

Many delegations stressed that **trade must be liberalised** in order to achieve the full employment and decent work goals and to bridge wage and employment gaps between developed and developing countries. A non-discriminatory, open and equitable multilateral trading system is essential in order to allow developing countries fair access to international markets. Many speakers voiced disappointment regarding the current lack of results at the Doha Round and urged a consensus to be quickly reached.

With regard to the possible role of the private sector, many delegations reiterated that Governments must support the growth of the private sector, particularly **micro enterprises**, and **small- and medium-sized businesses**. Commercial banks should be encouraged to lend to these enterprises, including in the agricultural and fishery sectors which concentrate a high

number of jobs in developing countries. The positive impact of micro-finance programmes on employment was also stressed.

Participants recognized the importance of the **rural sector** in developing economies. It was agreed that strategies aimed to boost employment, productivity and incomes in rural areas should be given a more prominent role. **Productivity growth in both on- and off-farm activities** were mentioned, taking into account the growth of off-farm employment that could stimulate demand so as to create virtuous cycle of productivity and employment growth. Speakers called for a scaling-up of resource flows for rural development in developing countries so that **investment in agricultural innovation** can be stimulated. It was pointed out that the success of employment efforts would depend in a large measure on the extent to which sufficient priority was given to agriculture and rural enterprise development, to the identification of appropriate pro-poor agricultural technologies, and to the reinforcement of rural member-based organizations.

Following the general discussion, the Council adopted a Ministerial Declaration on the theme of the 2006 High-level Segment.

For more information, please visit:

- €# The informal summary of the General Debate (<http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/hls2006/documents/06%20HLS%20Gen%20Debate%20Summary%20Rev.pdf>); and
- €# The 2006 Ministerial Declaration (<http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/jump2ods.asp?symbol=E/2006/L.8>)

C - Side Events: Informal Ministerial Roundtables on the Annual Ministerial Review and Development Cooperation Forum (3 July 2006)

The 2005 World Summit reaffirmed the fundamental role of the United Nations in the promotion of international cooperation for development. The Economic and Social Council, in particular, as a principal body for

coordination, policy review and policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, has a major role to play in promoting the implementation of the

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internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals, as well as improving aid effectiveness and impact.

Among the new functions assigned to ECOSOC by the 2005 World Summit is convening of an **Annual Ministerial Review (AMR)** and a biennial **Development Cooperation Forum (DCF)**. The AMR will provide a global forum for systematic review and monitoring of the implementation of the IADGs. The review should draw on the Functional and Regional Commissions of ECOSOC and other international organizations, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, the OECD/DAC, and regional development and integration mechanisms, such as NEPAD.

The DCF is aimed at reviewing trends in international development cooperation, including strategies, policies and financing, promoting greater coherence among the development activities of different development partners and strengthening the link between the normative and operational work of the United Nations. The Forum could play an important role in promoting greater impact of international development cooperation pursued by multilateral institutions, including OECD/DAC, the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations, as well as bilateral development agencies and South-South cooperation arrangements.

With the aim of initiating a focused dialogue among ECOSOC members and other interested stakeholders on the preparation for the first AMR and DCF, and as an input to the ongoing consultations of the General Assembly on ECOSOC reform, the Council organized on 3 July 2006 two high-level informal ministerial roundtables on these new functions.

The AMR roundtable was chaired by H.E. Mr. Ali Hachani, President of ECOSOC and moderated by Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. The panellists in the roundtable

follow-up. A close cooperation in this process with institutions carrying out reviews, in particular functional and regional commissions, are the key.

- €# A thorough preparation for the AMR is required and it should be started as early as possible.
- €# A cutting-edge report prepared by DESA, based on the latest and good quality data, will be critical in the success of the AMR. Such a report will demonstrate the added value of the AMR and will attract the attention of ministers as well as high-level civil society and private sector.
- €# Reviews are not conducted as an end in themselves. The true test for success of the AMR will be whether the AMRs will have a real impact on implementation.

The Development Cooperation Forum

- €# As a truly multilateral forum, promote global agreement on the definition and conceptual framework for “aid effectiveness”.
- €# Promote mutual accountability of both donors and recipient countries for living up to international commitments relating

The Economic and Social Council held a

capital-intensive activities and the lack of trickle-down effect, it was reiterated that measures to promote employment which is central to inclusive development should be contemplated.

The Council also introduced the issue of **youth unemployment: challenges and prospects**, under the context of Western Asia. Taking into account the high number of young people between 15 and 24 comprising 20 per cent of the whole population, the topic is pertinent in the context of Western Asia. The path forward included the creation of an environment for raising productivity and boosting competitiveness, and

The 2006 Coordination Segment of ECOSOC was held on 6 -10 July 2006. Under the theme of “Sustained economic growth for social development including eradication of poverty and hunger,” the Council examined the linkages between economic growth and social development and the role of the United Nations system in promoting a better understanding of the linkages between the different dimensions of development.

The segment comprised a number of events including:

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Nations conferences and summits. In particular, successful promotion of the work of ECOSOC as the principal body for coordination and implementation of the international development goal was stressed.

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F - ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment (11 - 13 July 2006)

The Economic and Social Council held its operational activities segment from 11 - 13 July 2006. Panel discussions, dialogues and general discussions were organized, providing a forum for discussing the operational activities of the United Nations development cooperation.

In the Interactive Panel on the **“Comprehensive review of trends and perspectives in funding for development cooperation,”** participants discussed:

- €# The issue of funding development cooperation;
- €# The need for strengthening South-South cooperation programmes; and
- €# The need for action to be taken by the organizations of the United Nations system to ensure coherence and effectiveness in their work at the country level to the benefit of recipient countries.

In the context of interactive dialogue following the panelists' interventions, delegations raised such issues as:

- €# Implementation of funding commitments;
- €# Multi-funding frameworks for increasing core resources; and
- €# How to measure forms of assistance and the contribution made through South-South cooperation, among other things.

The Council held a **“Dialogue with the Executive Heads of the United Nations Funds and Programmes,”** which aimed at providing opportunities to address issues that affect coherence and coordination of the United Nations at the country level. The Executive Heads of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme participated, and shared thoughts on how the United Nations development

programmes can enhance their effectiveness.

During the interactive dialogue, some participants referred to the need for competition among the agencies in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and the need for strengthening the authority of the Resident Coordinator that should be accompanied by increased accountability.

The segment continued on with another panel discussion with United Nations country team from Indonesia on the theme of **“the role of United Nations development cooperation in pursuit of employment creation and decent work: results, coherence and system-wide support through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework”**. Speakers first noted that following the tsunami, immediate priorities were to create labour opportunities for displaced persons particularly, and other affected populations, and to generate

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macroeconomic policies.

On its third day of the segment, the Council held a **general discussion on the operational activities for development of the UN system, discussing the follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council, in particular with regard to the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 59/250 on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR).**

During the debate, speakers stressed that more needed to be done in order to achieve significant increases in the effectiveness of development activities at the country level and to build on recent progress on the “one UN” plan at the country level. The fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations development system should be, among other things, their universal voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and multilateralism, which should guide the operational activities of the United Nations system in responding to the development needs of recipient countries in a flexible manner.

The Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review was an important part of a continuous cycle of reform, delegates said. It was a process

The Economic and Social Council held its Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the 2006 ECOSOC Substantive session from 14 to 19 July 2006 on the theme, “Strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance: implementing improved humanitarian response at all levels, including strengthening capacity, with particular attention to recent humanitarian emergencies including severe natural disasters”. Chaired by H.E. Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam, Vice-President of ECOSOC, the Segment comprised several panel discussions as well as general discussions on the theme of the Segment.

from which the United Nations system should constantly learn, and then implement, evaluate and revise its operations with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of aid and the capacity of

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In the second panel discussion on **risk reduction strategies in the recovery process**, panelists explained measures of reducing risks and steps taken in recovery efforts following natural disasters. Noting that risk reduction in recovery requires coordinated efforts by all actors, participants urged more effective community participa-

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and organizations at the regional and national levels to support efforts to strengthen humanitarian response capacities at all levels, in particular through preparedness programmes, with a view to improving the overall adequacy of the deployment of resources; stresses that the United Nations system should make efforts to enhance

The Economic and Social Council held its general segment on 19 -27 July. The Council adopted 46 resolutions and 40 decisions. Among them, the Council endorsed eleven resolutions and two decisions in the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; seven resolutions in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs; three resolutions in the report on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields; as well as resolutions on improving the United Nations informatics system, mainstreaming a gender perspective in

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The discussion on the theme of empowering the Least-Developed Countries further enriched through a panel discussion on the issue of **mobilizing resources and creating an enabling environment for poverty eradication in the least developed countries**, including implementation of the ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration adopted on this theme in 2004. Panelists expressed concerns on the relatively slow and patchy progress. They reiterated that it is high time to mobilize resources to help the poor and to combat the situation of poverty in the least developed countries and that real progress should be made with regard to the Brussels Programme of Action. During the interactive debate, participants stressed that productive capacity should be at the heart of development; there was a need to move towards a strategy that ensures more effective direction of resources; and the need for home-grown strategies.

The Council also discussed the issue of regional cooperation and the economic and social repercussion of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestine people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. Participants noted that the socio-economic situation inside the occupied Palestinian territory was deteriorating. The Council adopted **a resolution on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan**. The resolution called for the lifting of the severe restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people; and demanded that Israel comply with the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed in Paris on 29 April 1994 and that it urgently transfer Palestinian tax revenues.

In other business concerning regional cooperation and coordination, the Council heard reports on:

- €# The implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

- €# International cooperation in the field of informatics;
- €# The information and communication technologies task force; and
- €# Reports of coordination bodies.

Acting under its agenda item on **economic and environmental questions**, the Council **adopted texts** emanating from:

- €# The Commission on Sustainable Development;
- €# The United Nations Forum on Forests which includes proclaiming 2011 as the International Year of Forests;
- €# The Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme;
- €# The Statistical Commission;
- €# The Commission on Population and Development; and
- €# The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

The Council continued with its general discussion on economic and environmental questions, including the sub-items on sustainable development, human settlements, environment, forests, tobacco or health, statistics, population and development, public administration and development, international cooperation in tax matters, assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, and cartography.

The Council adopted resolutions in which **it extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Haiti and Guinea-Bissau** and terminated the mandate of the Advisory Group on Burundi. It also adopted a resolution on the assessment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups of the Economic and Social Council on African countries emerging from conflict, in which it commended the Groups for promoting a comprehensive approach to political stability and economic and social development, based on an integrated approach to relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, and for fostering interaction and coordination among the United Nations system and other actors working in the countries concerned. The

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the focal point in the system-wide follow-up. The Council agreed that the system-wide follow-up shall have a strong development orientation. ECOSOC also decided that the Commission shall be strengthened in its substantive capacity and enhanced through effective and meaningful

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**[http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/
ecosoc/](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/)**

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