

ECOSOC News

Newsletter on the work of the United Nations Economic and Social Council

_____ serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and to the United Nations. It makes or initiates studies and reports; makes recommendations on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters; and promotes respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Subsidiary bodies, commissions and committees of ECOSOC carry out its year-round work. ECOSOC strengthens cooperation within the United Nations system, coordinates the work of the specialized agencies and consults with non-governmental organizations. A substantive session of the Council is convened annually in July, and supplementary formal meetings as well as informal panels on topical issues are held throughout the year.

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I - ECOSOC 2007 Substantive Session, 2-26 July 2007 Geneva

A - High-level Segment of ECOSOC, 2-5 July 2007



Ambassador Dalius Cekuolis at the opening of the 2007 High-level Segment of ECOSOC

This year's High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council translated the vision of the 2005 World Summit into reality with the launch of its new functions, the [Annual Ministerial Review \(AMR\)](#) and the [Development Cooperation Forum \(DCF\)](#).

The session, which was opened by [Dalius Cekuolis](#), the President of the Council, featured a statement by Secretary-General [Ban Ki-moon](#) and the President of the General Assembly, [Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa](#). The Council also heard keynote statements from [Micheline Calmy-Rey](#), President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and [Gediminas Kirkilas](#), Prime Minister of Lithuania.

The formal opening was followed by a [high-level policy dialogue](#) with representatives of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the UN Conference on Trade and Development on current developments in the world economy and developments in international cooperation. Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, who moderated the dialogue noted that while economic growth in most economies had remained encouraging, the pace of world economic growth was slowing. Participants generally agreed on the assessment of the current economic growth, and noted that the increasing trade opportunities play a vital role in growth and development.

The high mark of the first Annual Ministerial Review, which focused on eradication of poverty and hunger, was the [national voluntary presentations by the Ministers of six developing countries](#) (Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia and Ghana). These presentations led to a truly interactive and engaging discussion and became an occasion for knowledge sharing and information exchange. Inspired by these discussions, the Netherlands announced it will volunteer next year, the first developed country to do so.

The following five key messages emerged from the Annual Ministerial Review: (1) The AMR, in particular the national voluntary presentations, is a positive innovation and its focus on implementation is to be welcomed; (2) While progress made in eradicating poverty is to be welcomed, progress remains uneven, with some parts of the world showing only limited progress; (3) There is a need for a long-term, broad and comprehensive approach to eradicating poverty. Efforts are needed to link growth and poverty and to ensure that growth is “pro-poor”; (4) There is a need to fully implement the global partnership for development and to enhance the momentum generated by the 2005 World Summit. In this regard, there was a call for the development of benchmarks and indicators for MDG 8; (5) Adverse effects of climate change pose a threat to development and countries must work together to secure a post-Kyoto multilateral regime. These key messages were also reflected in the [Ministerial Declaration](#), adopted by consensus following intense and protracted negotiations. The Declaration has contributed to the revival of ECOSOC by sending a message that there is a broad-based consensus in dealing with the challenges of eradication of poverty and hunger and that the international community is united in dealing with the obstacles in the realization of MDG1.

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C - Coordination Segment, 6-10 July 2007

The [Coordination Segment](#) adopted two resolutions: on “[the role of the UN system in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all](#)”, which was the theme of the coordination segment this year; and on the “[role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including 61/16](#)”.

The first resolution followed up on the 2006 Ministerial Declaration which requested the UN system to integrate the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in its policies, programmes and activities. The resolution requested UN system organizations to continue their efforts in this regard and encouraged all relevant agencies to collaborate in using, adapting and evaluating the application of the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work. It also invited the UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies to assess and adopt the three-phased approach proposed by ILO to promote the goals of full employment and decent work.

The resolution encouraged UN system organizations and the international financial institutions (IFIs) to collaborate closely with the ILO to reach a better understanding and implementation of the decent work agenda and to develop mechanisms to share expertise and lessons learned regarding the impact of relevant policies and programmes on employment and decent work.

Finally, the resolution requested the UN system organizations to coordinate their activities and programmes related to employment and decent-work and to promote a comprehensive approach to these objectives. It also requested the UN system to promote synergies and strategic collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and IFIs, Governments and representatives of employers and workers, to support the implementation of relevant national strategies and programmes promoting employment and decent work.

The second resolution focused on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major UN conferences and summits and reaffirmed the need to continue to strengthen the Council as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination. It underscored the close link between this exercise and the adaptation of the working methods of ECOSOC, the discussion of which will be resumed later in the year. The resolution stressed the importance of the adoption of a multi-year programme of work for the Annual Ministerial Review.

[Two panel discussions](#) were also held during the coordination segment to enrich the debate. The first one was on the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work, and the other on the role of the UN system in promoting the employment and decent work agenda in national strategies frameworks, focusing on the experience of Latin America.

A second panel discussion, in a format of a dialogue between the ECOSOC Bureau and the Chairpersons of the functional commissions, addressed ways to strengthen the role of the Council and its subsidiary machinery in promoting a coordinated and integrated follow-up to the major UN conferences and summits and also considered how the work of the functional commissions could contribute to promoting the goals of employment and decent work.

The Council decided to focus on “the role of the United Nations system in implementing the ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration of 2007” at the coordination segment of the 2008 substantive session.

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D - Operational Activities Segment, 10-13 July 2007

The [Operational Activities Segment](#) had as an overarching theme the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development (TCPOR) which the General Assembly will undertake this fall. During the debates, Member States emphasized the importance of the TCPOR as the guiding framework for operational activities for development of the entire UN system. The debate underscored the importance of national ownership of and leadership in these activities and the related need to build national capacities. Discussions also stressed that operational activities should be assessed in terms of their contribution to countries' efforts to achieve Internationally Agreed Development Goals (including MDGs). It was also noted that countries need to access the full range of knowledge and expertise of the UN system. The need to further improve support to transition from relief to development through better coordination with peace-building efforts and more sustained funding, as well as the importance of regional dimensions, were amongst other themes of the debate. A proposal was made for good multilateral donorship that emphasizes the importance of increased core resources for the United Nations system and more stable and predictable non-core resources.

Overall, the debate generated suggestions for the draft recommendations that will be contained in the report of the Secretary-General that will inform the negotiations of the General Assembly on the TCPOR in the fall of 2007. These negotiations will lead to the adoption of a new TCPOR resolution to guide the operational work of the UN system for the next three years.

E - Humanitarian Affairs Segment, 16-18 July 2007

The theme of the [Humanitarian Affairs Segment](#) was "Strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance through enhancing the effectiveness of needs-based humanitarian assistance". At the end of its work, the Council adopted by consensus a resolution on [Strengthening of the coordination of the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations](#).

The resolution highlighted the need for capacity building of national, local and regional organizations, broader partnerships among humanitarian organizations, the incorporation of a gender perspective in humanitarian operations, as well as the need to improve humanitarian stand-by capacities, including the facilitation of standby arrangements with the private sector. Member States also requested more analysis on the use of military assets in natural disaster response and supported the call for further improvements in humanitarian financing mechanisms, such as consolidated and flash appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund and other funds.

Thirty-two Member States and eight UN agencies and international organizations participated in the general debate. This year's overarching theme was the need for improved disaster response, including risk reduction, preparedness and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. In this respect, several delegations called for more focused efforts to build capacity for disaster response at local, national and regional levels.

Both donor governments and beneficiary countries supported the Central Emergency Response Fund as a measure to bring timeliness, predictability and impartiality to humanitarian operations. Delegations also supported the development of other non-earmarked country-level humanitarian funding mechanisms, alongside improvements to needs assessments, financial tracking and funds administration. Humanitarian agencies highlighted their own emergency response funds as integral

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The Economic and Social Council considered and adopted a resolution on the review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. The least developed countries had made tremendous efforts to build enabling national environments for the implementation of the Programme of Action. It was noted that the economic performance of the least developed countries had been improving, and they were making good efforts towards attaining the target of annual GDP growth rate of 7 percent.

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II– More Information

Substantive Session of ECOSOC

High-level Segment: <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/index.shtml>

Coordination Segment: <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/cs2007.shtml>

Operational Activities Segment: <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/oa2007.shtml>

Humanitarian Affairs Segment: <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/has2007.shtml>

General Segment: <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/julyhls/gs2007.shtml>

Other Information

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/>

About ECOSOC: <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/about/>

UN Press Releases and Meetings Coverage on ECOSOC:
<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/ecopress.shtml>

Press Releases and Meetings Coverage of the 2007 Substantive Session of ECOSOC:
<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/newsandpress.shtml>

2007 Meetings and Events of ECOSOC and its Subsidiary Bodies:
<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/meetings/>

For further information on the Press Releases and Meetings Coverage of the Functional Commissions of ECOSOC, please visit <http://www.un.org/apps/pressreleases/index.asp>

For further information on the work of the UN Secretariat in economic and social affairs, please visit DESA News at:
<http://www.un.org/esa/desa/desaNews/desaNewsVolumes.html>