



STATEMENT BY

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
H.E. MR. JAN ELIASSON**

AT

**THE FIRST MEETING OF THE 2006
ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION OF ECOSOC**

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Mr President, Secretary-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to have been invited to address this first Organizational Session of ECOSOC in 2006.

Today we have an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the past year, and to look forward to the tasks ahead of us.

First, I would like to pay tribute to the way in which the outgoing President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Munir Akram, has guided ECOSOC's work over the past twelve months. With the support of a very active and able Bureau with Ambassadors Cordovez, Hachani, Nesho and Verbeke, President Akram used his leadership, energy and vision to ensure that ECOSOC played a leading role in advancing the development agenda in 2005.

At the same time ECOSOC was working hard to prepare the ground for the important reforms which were to see a revitalized ECOSOC come into being in 2006. If, as it will, ECOSOC emerges as an organ of enhanced impact and influence in 2006, it will in no small part be thanks to the efforts of President Akram and his team in 2005.

I also want to congratulate the incoming President of ECOSOC, my friend and Vice President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Ali Hachani of Tunisia, and the new Bureau – Ambassadors Hannesson, Kariyawasam, Mérorès and Šerkšnys on their election; I look forward to working with you as we all take on the challenge of turning our agreements into action.

ECOSOC's achievements in 2005 were impressive. Beginning with the Spring meeting, and continuing through the well prepared Substantive Session to the Bureau meeting at the World Summit, ECOSOC's work did a great deal to build momentum and understanding amongst delegations on matters central to the development agenda. As you know, this led up to a World Summit at which important development commitments were made, including commitments to substantially increase the flow of resources to developing countries.

We were also given a glimpse of what a revitalized and more responsive ECOSOC could offer when the special meetings on Avian flu and the African Food Crisis took place, and when the Humanitarian segment held a high-level panel discussion on lessons learned from the Indian Ocean tsunami. These meetings

succeeded both in bringing together key decision makers and in focusing the world's attention on matters of concern to us all.

Just as we look back to 2005 as a year of commitments, so we look forward to 2006 as a year of implementation. On the development agenda in particular, but also in the other areas of ECOSOC's work, much remains to be done.

For the General Assembly, one of our urgent tasks in this regard is to conclude soon our negotiations – ably co-chaired by Ambassadors Diarra and Verbeke – on the resolutions on ECOSOC reform and Development follow-up which will enable ECOSOC to begin preparing a reformed 2006 programme of work. I very much hope delegations will do all they can to bring these negotiations to a swift conclusion. It is important that ECOSOC has a clear mandate for reform before it holds its Organizational Session in early February.

The reformed ECOSOC will be a vital mechanism for ensuring that all development commitments made in 2005 and before – not least the Millennium Development Goals and the other internationally agreed development goals - are followed up and implemented. We have the best chance in years to enhance the

standing of ECOSOC, through the promotion of global policy dialogue, the holding of an Annual Ministerial Review, the convening of a Development Co-operation Forum and special sessions on humanitarian emergencies, as well as through the revitalization of the Spring meeting and existing elements of the Substantive Session.

With less than ten years to go until 2015, and with much of the world seriously lagging behind in progress toward the Millennium Development Goals, we cannot afford to wait. We must ensure that 2006 is remembered as a year in which ECOSOC fulfilled its potential and became a decisive player in driving forward the development agenda. And with the range of actors and the scope of issues in the development field now so wide, the other element of ECOSOC reform – that of co-ordination of UN system activities – is also one of the utmost importance for a strengthened United Nations.

I remain convinced that ECOSOC and the General Assembly, two of the United Nations' principal organs, have much to gain from working closely together. I will continue to meet regularly with the President of ECOSOC throughout the year.

I look forward to working with you, Mr President, and with all of you, and I wish you, your Bureau and staff every success and a good dosage of inspiration for the important year ahead.