

**9 July 2008**

**2008 ECOSOC Substantive Session  
Coordination Segment**

**Panel discussion on “Coherence: strengthening the normative and  
operational link in the work of the UN on rural employment”**

**New York, 9 July 2008  
10:00 am – 12:30 pm**

**Introductory remarks by  
H.E. Mr. Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima  
Vice-President of ECOSOC**

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to open the round table discussion of the coordination segment on “Coherence: strengthening the normative and operational link in the work of the UN on rural employment”.

This round table will provide an opportunity for the Council to promote greater coherence and coordination in the work of its subsidiary bodies related to rural employment, which is critical for the eradication of poverty and hunger.

Several functional commissions have focused on rural employment within their respective mandates and have produced comprehensive policy guidance on this issue. For example, at its last session in March, the Commission on Social Development has laid out a comprehensive policy framework to achieve full employment and decent work in the context of poverty eradication strategies. Such framework encompasses macroeconomic policies, enterprise and rural development, education, training and skills, social protection, and regulatory policies.

The issue of employment has also been taken up by the Commission on Sustainable Development in the context of sustainable agricultural and rural development and by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The latter has called for innovative strategies that combined the benefits of conventional science and technology for rural development, such as those of the green revolution, with the potential growth enabled by new and emerging technologies, such as information and communication technologies and biotechnologies. In particular, at its 11<sup>th</sup> session, the commission examined development-oriented policies for a socio-economically inclusive information society.

The Commission on the Status of Women has also been concerned with promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in the labour market. At its 52<sup>nd</sup> session in 2008, the Commission has stressed the need to fund labour market policies that integrate gender perspective in the realization of the employment goals in all sectors.

The policy guidance emerging from the work of the functional commissions, however, is not always reflected in the work of the governing bodies of relevant UN system organizations, and does not always translate into coherent and comprehensive UN system programmes and operations supporting rural employment in national strategies for poverty eradication and development.

By providing a venue for dialogue between the Council's relevant subsidiary bodies, the round table will be an important opportunity for these bodies to discuss how they can best harmonize their work in support of rural employment. This approach will help strengthening the link between the normative and operational work carried out by these bodies on this issue as well as enhance system-wide coherence.

The Council might wish to consider the possibility to hold this type of dialogue in the coordination segment every year and to focus on different aspects of the UN development agenda regularly discussed by the functional commissions. Having this dialogue in the coordination segment gives the Council not only an opportunity to strengthen collaboration and synergies in the on-going policy work of its functional commissions, but also to find new ways to strengthen the link between the normative and operational support to the implementation of the UN development agenda.

It is now with great pleasure that I give the floor to Mr. Diop, Executive Director of the Social Protection Sector of ILO, who will moderate the discussion. Mr. Diop, you have the floor.