



PRESS RELEASE

ECOSOC Opens Annual High-Level Meeting in Geneva with Focus on Education

GENEVA, 4 JULY: Ministers of education and heads of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes will gather at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 4 to 8 July 2011 for the annual high-level meeting of the UN body overseeing economic and social issues.

Given that the primary emphasis of this year's meeting will be on improving education, they will be joined by more than 500 delegates, heads of non-governmental and corporate groups and international financial institutions, among others. At least 67 million children of school age are still denied the right to education due to financial, social or other challenges, including those linked to high fertility rates, HIV/AIDS and armed conflict (*please see fact sheet on education*).

Ambassador **Lazarous Kapambwe** (Zambia), President of the Council, will open the High-Level Segment with Deputy Secretary-General **Asha-Rose Migiro** and **Joseph Deiss**, President of the Sixty-Fifth Session of the UN General Assembly. **Micheline Calmy-Rey**, President of Switzerland.

The Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), part of the High-Level Segment, will focus on international goals and commitments in regard to education, including Millennium Development Goal 2. In a report released in preparation for the meeting, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the right to basic education created conditions to realize other economic, social and cultural rights, as well as acting as a catalyst for social change. Progress in education, Secretary-General Ban noted, was interlinked to progress in health, poverty reduction and gender equality.

The High-Level Segment will also feature a policy dialogue between the UN, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund on current developments in the world economy and policy options to correct the unstable course of world financial markets.

As part of the events being organized:

- A special policy dialogue: "Accelerating education for all (EFA): Mobilizing resources and partnerships" (4 July at 12 p.m.);
- A Face to Face debate on: "Education, human rights and conflicts" (4 July at 3 p.m.);
- A special policy dialogue: "Education for sustainable development" (5 July at 12 p.m.);
- The panel discussion: "Promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable growth for accelerating poverty eradication and achievement of the MDGs" (6 July at 10 am);
- A special policy dialogue: "Education challenges in Africa and Least developed Countries (LDCs)" (7 July at 10 a.m.); and
- A thematic panel discussion: "Education for the future – changing needs" (8 July at 10 a.m.)

Two key reports will be launched during the High-Level Segment.

- This year's *World Economic and Social Survey* on "The Great Green Technological Transformation," calling for major investments in new technologies to build green economies, will be launched on 5 July by Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.
- On 7 July, Secretary-General Ban will launch the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2011*, which contains new data on major successes and existing challenges in achieving the MDGs by 2015, the target year. Some of the poorest countries have made the greatest strides in education. For example, Burundi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and Tanzania, all of them categorized by the UN as least developed countries, have achieved or are nearing the goal of universal primary education.

At the High-Level Segment, eleven countries—Bangladesh, Belarus, Germany, Malawi, Mauritius, Mexico, Pakistan, Qatar, Senegal, Turkey and Venezuela—will give presentations on their national progress in achieving the education goals.

In addition to ministers and senior officials from Member States, others attending the talks will include Irina Bokova, Director General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Anthony Lake, Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); Pascal Lamy, Director-General, World Trade Organization (WTO); Supachai Panitchpakdi Secretary-General, UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP); Juan Somavia, Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO); Otaviano Canuto dos Santos Fihlo, Vice-President, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, World Bank; and Min Zhu, Special Advisor to the Managing Director, International Monetary Fund (IMF).

An Innovation Fair will also be organized in parallel to the High-level Segment. It will bring together more than 30 exhibitors, who will showcase innovative experiences in support of the Education for All agenda. A series of side-events organized by a broad range of development actors will also take place.

About the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

ECOSOC is the principal United Nations body for coordinating and reviewing economic and social policies, providing advice and fostering dialogue on development issues. The Annual Ministerial Review, which was mandated at the 2005 World Summit, assesses the progress made in the implementation of the MDGs and the other goals and targets agreed at the major UN conferences and summits over the past 15 years, which constitute the United Nations Development Agenda. Each year, the AMR focuses on a specific aspect of that Agenda.

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