

**Statement by Mr. José Antonio Ocampo,
Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs
at the Closing of the 2005 Substantive Session of ECOSOC
New York, 27 July 2005**

Mr. President
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have reached the end of four, remarkable weeks of high-level engagement, dialogue, deliberation, and decision in ECOSOC. From the new “Voices against poverty” session and high-level policy dialogue with financial and trade institutions, to roundtable discussions and panel presentations, we have witnessed renewed energy and commitment across an array of critical issues. The large number of high-level participants, including two Heads of State and Government, has provided an important indication of the Council’s relevance and growing vigour. Mr. President, my congratulations to you, the entire Bureau, and all Council Members on producing such a successful substantive session. Your excellent summary of the Council’s deliberations gives a good sense of the depth and richness of what the session has accomplished.

The Council used the timing of this session—in advance of the World Summit, this September—to distinct and positive effect. It constructed the whole session around the various aspects of a single, coherent theme: implementing the UN development agenda that has emerged from the summits and conferences, including the Millennium Development Goals. The result? The Council today sends a clear, coherent message to the Summit, whose outcome will bear greatly on the future effectiveness of international cooperation.

Mr. President, allow me to underscore what I see as the seven key elements of the message, from this ECOSOC session to the World Summit.

Element one. ECOSOC understands the UN Development Agenda as the comprehensive framework for pursuing poverty eradication and sustainable development—and as a powerful stepping stone in the path toward fair, equitable, and inclusive societies and a fair, equitable, and inclusive globalization. Better societies, and a better world, are built when all crucial aspects of development—economic growth, social development, and environmental protection—proceed in harmony, and not at cross purposes. The Agenda must be pursued in an integrated and coordinated way.

Element two. ECOSOC stressed the need to overcome quickly the so-called “implementation gap.” Here, in this Chamber, Member States have repeatedly identified the gap’s cause: a lack not of strategy, but of political will and commitment. This should be taken into account in the reform and future work of ECOSOC.

Element three. ECOSOC recognizes the need to continue to strengthen its links to its subsidiary bodies, as well as its role in system-wide coordination. Previous

progress in these areas will not suffice for ECOSOC to serve the role envisioned for it—and expected of it.

This year's session gave unprecedented attention to the coordination segment, in which chairpersons of all the Council's functional commissions participated. We should vigorously pursue efforts to connect the work of the functional commissions more directly to that of ECOSOC: through closely linked, multi-year work programmes; or through an indicative list of substantive themes set by the Council.

The session also showed a much greater degree of engagement the UN Chief Executives Board and ECOSOC. During the high-level segment, the report of the CEB, *One United Nations: Catalyst for Progress and Change*, was launched and received with great interest. During the coordination segment, the UN system organizations elaborated their efforts to support the achievement of the MDGs. In an important step forward, this "Accountability" report of the CEB has also helped to identify how ECOSOC can work better with the UN system around one, comprehensive development agenda. The Council needs to build on this and further strengthen its links to CEB—and thus its capacity to coordinate the work of the UN system.

Element four. The UN system should promote stronger linkages between its normative and operational work. This means, in the first instance, that the UN organizations should support the efforts of national governments to achieve the development goals set within the UN framework. This, in turn, requires sufficient resources. The lack of adequate funding—particularly of core resources—is the single most important constraint on the performance of the UN system's actors in development. This requires urgent attention and action from the world leaders who will meet here in September.

Element five. The session has stressed the importance of regional cooperation and the need better to integrate regional bodies in global processes. To this end, ECOSOC should fully exploit the potential of the regional commissions. The regional commissions could play a key role in the follow-up to the major conferences: through the mechanism of peer reviews; and through contributing to the proposed global development cooperation forum. In the area of linking development and security, ECOSOC should also draw on the broad-based experience of the regional commissions to enhance its own activities—and its work in relation to the proposed peace-building commission.

Element six. ECOSOC members have made a unanimous call for the Council to make every effort to enhance its capacity in humanitarian affairs. The session focused on this persistent challenge for the UN in the context of the recent tsunami. President Clinton's presentation, as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, energized the Council's deliberations. The timing and scale of the tsunami led to a proliferation of relief actions and actors and high levels of public, private and governmental assistance. While coordination generally went well, certain complications arose. It became more than evident that, in this critical area, ECOSOC can provide the

arena to discuss policy issues, to promote coordination, and to develop an effective institutional response capacity.

Element seven. ECOSOC also provides the forum for addressing the security-development nexus. The immense challenge of long-term recovery, reconstruction, and reconciliation warrants a more institutionalized focus. The Council should reinforce its links to the Security Council and the proposed Peace-building Commission—and its capacity to promote an integrated approach to the various dimensions of development, conflict prevention, democracy, and human rights. As the Secretary-General emphasized in his report *In Larger Freedom*, this is the main challenge ahead for the UN. For, without such an approach, progress achieved in any one of these areas will not be secure.

Mr. President,

I am confident that the World Summit will welcome this multifaceted message from ECOSOC. Indeed, discussions on the Summit's draft outcome have paid considerable attention to strengthening ECOSOC. And the Summit seems likely to adopt a number of proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report on functions that ECOSOC should perform, which largely coincide with those made by the President of the Council. These include providing for peer reviews; serving as a development cooperation forum; convening emergency meetings; and engaging in peace-building.

Nonetheless, to perform these functions effectively, the Council will need to re-think—and change—its methods of work. The Council needs to introduce more flexibility in its work, to accord with its actual functions. Its coordination function has to respond to the diversity of the UN system—which includes agencies with normative, policy, and operational orientations, and with global, regional, and national focuses. The Council also needs to separate its management functions from its role in policy guidance. To best address topical and emerging issues, ECOSOC needs to meet as required during the year. And, across the board, its various functions should be linked to the relevant meetings held during the year. The Council needs to re-think how it organizes its substantive session and the various segments. You, Mr. President, have made a number of useful proposals in this regard. I urge Members to make the Council an agile and vibrant body, ready to respond flexibly and effectively to the challenges of our times.

We have many hopes and aspirations for the Council, for its future functions and role in driving the implementation of the UN Development Agenda. We need to ensure that the Council can deliver results commensurate with the expectations of the international community. We have concrete proposals at hand. What we need now are bold decisions and actions—at the Summit in September and in its follow-up in the months thereafter.