

SUMMARY:

INTRODUCTION OF REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND GENERAL DEBATE ON THE “IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE MAJOR UN CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS”

The meeting was chaired by ECOSOC Vice-President H.E. Mr. Dalius Cekuolis of Lithuania. Following the introductory remarks by the Vice-President, Mr. Sarbuland Khan, Director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, introduced the updated report of the Secretary-General 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”. He pointed out that ECOSOC has been a front runner in the efforts to promote an integrated approach to the implementation of the UN development agenda. He also said that given the important interlinkages between the realization of the development goals agreed at the different UN conferences, today, the need for an integrated and coordinated follow up of major UN conferences and summits, both in substantive terms and in terms of institutional coherence, is widely shared.

He also highlighted a number of concrete steps which the Council had taken such as efforts to adopt a multi-year work program for the coordination segment, a consolidated reporting on the outcomes of functional commissions, greater interaction between the ECOSOC bureau and the bureaux of the functional commissions. While progress has been made, there are still numerous constraints caused by various reasons such as institutional fragmentation, diversity of governance structures and the existence of many tracks for implementation of the UN development agenda. He pointed out that the 2005 World Summit marked a major step in providing ECOSOC with new instruments that have the potential to integrated the implementation of the agenda. The Annual Ministerial Reviews (AMR) and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) provide the Council with vehicles to promote substantive and architectural coherence in the conference follow-up. To fully benefit from these new opportunities functional and regional commissions will need to realign their work with the new ECOSOC functions and ECOSOC will need to adopt a multi-year-programme of work for the AMR thematic reviews. He also emphasized that the DCF with its ability to help close the existing gap between the normative and operational work of the UN system has an important role to play in promoting system-wide coherence.

The European Union welcomed the Secretary-General’s report on the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the UN conferences and summits and expressed its appreciation of the work done in merging the two separate reports which were previously considered under agenda items 6, 8, 13 and 14. The EU underlined the major role of the ECOSOC in the coordination of economic, environmental and humanitarian fields and in the dialogue with the wider UN system, as well as in the implementation of the major UN conferences and summits, and the achievement of the MDGs, which the EU said to be related.

The EU said that salient progress had been made in the implementation of the GA resolution 57/270B through its annual consideration at the coordination segment, but that it was now time to look forward and find the most suitable way in promoting the implementation of the GA resolution 57/270B and the World Summit Outcome. In this regard, the EU recalled that in its understanding the Annual Ministerial Review is a way to upgrade the follow-up of conferences and summits, a task therein assigned currently to the coordination segment. It stressed that the coordination segment should thus be considered in that context to see how the Development Cooperation Forum, the High Level Dialogue and the Annual Ministerial Review can be organized within the high-level segment for genuine implementation of resolution 57/270B.

Russia concurred with the EU that there are deep interlinkages between the implementation of the MDGS and the internationally agreed development goals. Russia said that comprehensive multisectoral approaches as well as intergovernmental monitoring and assessment was needed to make progress in implementation. While calling for a single framework for the overall assessment of progress. Russia noted that the individual follow-up processes of the different functional commissions should be maintained.

With regard to the AMR, Russia pointed out that in order to allow the functional and regional commissions to contribute to the AMR there was a need for predictability in the subjects to be reviewed and that adopting a multi-year programme of work was a one possible way to achieve that. Russia noted that the thematic AMRs could ensure consistency in the review process and provide a framework for overall assessment of progress in the implementation of the broader development agenda. It further said that the platform for the first AMR and DCF should be provided by the 2007 ECOSOC session. Russia also emphasized that the new functions of ECOSOC asked for an increased role of the coordination segment which could be used to translate the decisions of the High-Level Segment into tangible guidelines for the UN system. This could be achieved by linking the theme of the coordination segment to the AMR and suggested that it be the same as the theme of the High-level Segment.

Russia saw the functional commissions as a key mechanism for the implementation of the decisions from the UN conferences and summits and the review and assessment of progress. It called for an increased thematic consistency of their activities, as well as increased cooperation between the functional commissions and ECOSOC. The AMRs were a new opportunity to review the work of the functional commissions and the recommendation of adding a standing agenda item on their contribution to the new functions of ECOSOC was welcomed. Russia believed that the Regional Commissions should be regional coordination centers for the AMRs and called for a strengthening of their capacities, in order for them to conduct regional reviews of internationally agreed development goals. Russia applauded the work of the CEB as well.

International Chamber of Commerce stated that the business action plan was in support of and committed to partnering with others to bring benefits of the information

society to peoples around the world and the Chamber was dedicated to helping bring about the achievement of the MDGs. The business community welcomed the Global Alliance for ICT and development. The representative also said that, in the future, business would request any consultation process changing the CSTD mandate, function and agenda to follow a process similar to that used for the establishment of the Global Alliance, which provided a large consultative process. He concluded by saying that business looked forward to contributing its expertise to ECOSOC and to CSTD, including through the global alliance, using the procedure that would be approved during the 2006 substantive session.

Mr. Sarbuland Khan, Director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, thanked delegations for their comments. Looking into the future, he expressed hope that the new instruments which have been given to ECOSOC by the World Summit would bring about a real change in the way ECOSOC works and will help it in promoting an integrated approach. Looking back at ECOSOC's past achievements he emphasized the significant changes that ECOSOC has induced. He pointed out that at the country level, thanks to the work of the Council, coordination has been strengthened, for instance through the thematic groups and the development of the common country assessments (CCA/UNDAF), which were a result of three working groups of ECOSOC. He said that major steps forward in the area of operational activities were to be expected through the Panel on System Wide Coherence and that these needed to be matched by changes in the normative area to ensure that both the normative and the operational activities are brought together to form a harmonious system.