

**STATEMENT BY**  
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**PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ON THE**  
**HANDOVER OF THE ECOSOC PRESIDENCY**  
**NEW YORK, 17 JANUARY 2006**

**Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It has been a great personal privilege for me and an honour for my country, Pakistan, to preside over the Economic and Social Council, during 2005, the sixtieth anniversary year of the United Nations.

2. Today we start work in 2006 with a new ECOSOC President and Bureau as Pakistan's term comes to a close.

3. Undoubtedly, 2005 has been a momentous year for the UN. It was a particularly intense and productive year for ECOSOC.

4. When I assumed ECOSOC Presidency last year, preparations for the 2005 World Summit were underway. Together with the new Bureau, we made it our overriding objective to ensure that ECOSOC meaningfully contributed to the successful outcome of the 2005 World Summit. I also provided the opportunity to initiate efforts to resolve ECOSOC to the central position envisaged for it as the Central UN organ in the economic and social field.

5. The Substantive Session of ECOSOC and the high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods Institutions, WTO and UNCTAD last spring provided an opportunity to discuss the economic, social and environmental agenda of the Summit. Some of the important messages from these discussions resonated with our Leaders at the 2005 World Summit. Among them were the following:

**First**, we are not likely to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals, in many countries unless an accelerated and concerted effort is made both at the national and international level. This was the consensus conclusion in several reports we received; the Millennium Project Report, the SG's Report and World Bank's Global Survey.

**Second**, the MDGs should be pursued together with the other goals and targets of the major UN conferences and summits – the so-called Internationally Agreed Development Goals. This was reflected in the Summit Outcome Document. The emerging actions to make poverty history will be successful and sustainable only if the goals of equity on trade, finance, technology and other sectors are also implemented.

**Third**, international development cooperation – concessional finance, trade access, technical cooperation – remains critical in enabling most developing

countries to implement the MDGs and IADGs. Welcome commitments were made by some of the developed countries – to increase ODA, writing off debt, generating innovative financing. But, clearly, the requirements are larger, broader and very urgent.

**Fourth**, security and development are inextricably linked. Without peace and stability, countries are not likely to achieve the development goals; conversely, without rapid social and economic development, peace and security will be further eroded in many countries and regions. Africa, in particular, is afflicted with complex crises which require coordinated response from peace-keeping to peace-building to sustainable economic and social development. The activities of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Haiti in 2005 continued to demonstrate ECOSOC's relevance as a unique forum to promote an integrated approach to the issues of post-conflict peace-building.

**Fifth**, humanitarian emergencies – national and man-made – are increasing. Witness the Indian Ocean Hurricane Tsunami, Katrina and the South Asian Earthquake. These disasters brought home the need for comprehensive and coordinated response. This can be best undertaken by the U.N. and its family of organizations together with support of Civil Society actors. ECOSOC has been asked by the Summit to play a role in monitoring a coherent international response.

**Six**, there was wide recognition of the central role that ECOSOC can play in promoting the international development agenda. ECOSOC should be strengthened to effectively fulfill the mandate assigned to it under the UN Charter.

6. During the year, a joint endeavour was made to revive the central role which ECOSOC is assigned to play by the Charter in promoting international development agenda. Specific proposals were developed, which I had the privilege of submitting to the Summit preparatory process. The Summit recognized the need for an effective ECOSOC and decided to further strengthen it by reinforcing its existing mandates and entrusting it with new mandates such as the holding of an Annual Ministerial Review, the promotion of global policy dialogue, convening development cooperation forum and holding special sessions on humanitarian emergencies.

7. While pursuing the ECOSOC reform initiative, we also decided to innovatively use the existing flexibilities to energize and vitalize ECOSOC. To this end, a key innovation introduced at the 2005 Substantive Session was a segment on Voices against Poverty, which provided a refreshing perspective on development. Several special events and briefings were also held during 2005, including an ECOSOC Bureau Summit, chaired by the President of Pakistan and attended by several heads of State and Government, senior Ministerial representatives as well as the heads of IBRD, IMF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCAP. Special events were also held on "The Avian Flu" and the "Food Crises in Africa".

8. An enduring challenge for the Council is to raise the visibility of its work outside this Chamber and secure high-level participation in our meetings. With your support and cooperation, during 2005, ECOSOC witnessed an unprecedented level of participation by the heads of State and Government, ministerial representatives, heads of institutions and UN agencies, civil society and private sector representatives. I have also encouraged an active dialogue and interaction with civil society organizations and media representatives and organized briefings to keep them informed about ECOSOC's activities.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

9. While I believe ECOSOC made a significant contribution during 2005 including to the positive outcome of the World Summit, much still remains to be done.

10. First, we need to quickly operationalize the mandates given to ECOSOC, to promote global policy dialogue, World Annual Ministerial Review, serve as a Development Cooperation Forum coordinate the response humanitarian emergencies and contribute the work of the PBC and promote system-wide coherence and, broadly, to secure the implementation of the UN Development Agenda.

11. One pervasive problem in this context remains the insistence that these and other additional responsibilities be performed within existing resources. This effort will emasculate and not enhance the effectiveness of the ECOSOC and the UN in the economic and social fields. Indeed, it is unacceptable that resources for ECOSOC's out of schedule meetings are provided only "if available".

12. In this context, I hope the General Assembly will very soon adopt specific and clear decisions on ECOSOC Reforms and on the implementation of the UN Development Agenda and commitments undertaken by our leaders at the 2005 Summit. In my view, those decisions will be an important steps towards reorganizing and reviving ECOSOC's role as the apex of economic and social governance in the international system. Yet, it will be up to ECOSOC itself, under the leadership of its new President, to transform these negotiations into operational reality. Despite the critics, skeptics, I believe that, overwhelmingly, the political-will will be maintained to support the UN. In our globalized world, multilateralism is not an option, it is inevitability. And the goal of promoting "better standards of life in larger freedom" is as important as saving "succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

13. I would like to stress that the Council's achievements this year could not have been possible without the excellent work of the Council's four Vice-Presidents, Ambassador Ali Hachani of Tunisia, Ambassador Agim Nesho of Albania, Ambassador Diego Cardovez of Ecuador, and Ambassador Johan C. Verbeke of

Belgium, ably assisted by their experts. They carried a major part of the burden of work.

14. I will be remiss also if I do not recall the wholehearted and professional support of the Secretariat to the work of the Council. I would like to particularly thank Mr. Ocampo and his team including Mr. Civili, Mr Sarbuland Khan and Mr. Navid Hanif and their colleagues as well as Mr. Nikhil Seth and his team for their very able support. I express my sincere gratitude to all of them.

15. In closing, I am very happy to pass on the baton to Ambassador Ali Hachani, a seasoned professional, whose able stewardship of the Council as ECOSOC President should bring new dynamism and energy to the Council ECOSOC during 2006.

**Thank you.**