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N e w s f r o m

E C O S O C

Newsletter on the work of the United Nations Economic and Social Council

ECOSOC -- The 54-member Economic and Social Council serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and to the United Nations. It makes or initiates studies and reports; makes recommendations on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters; and promotes respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Subsidiary bodies, commissions and committees of ECOSOC carry out its year-round work. ECOSOC strengthens cooperation within the UN system, coordinates the work of the specialized agencies and consults with non-governmental organizations. A substantive session of the Council is convened annually in July, and supplementary formal meetings as well as informal panels on topical issues are held throughout the year.

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL SELECTS BUREAU FOR 2003

On 15 January 2003, ECOSOC elected its Bureau for 2003. The new President of the Council is Mr. Gert Rosenthal, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations. As Vice-Presidents the Council elected H.E. Mrs. Marjatta Rasi, Permanent Representative of Finland; H.E. Mr. Valery P. Kuchinsky, Permanent Representative of Ukraine; H.E. Mr. Murari Raj Sharma, Permanent Representative of Nepal; and H.E. Mr. Abdul Mejid Hussein, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia.

The main functions of the Bureau are to propose the agenda of the Council, draw up a programme of work and organize the session with the support of the United Nations Secretariat.

ECOSOC SELECTS THEMES FOR 2003 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION

On 19 December 2002, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) chose as the theme for the High-Level Segment of this year's substantive session "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development", and as the theme for the Coordination Segment "The role of ECOSOC in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major UN conferences and summits". The preparatory process for the substantive session, which will be held in July in Geneva, Switzerland, will take place during the coming months.

ECOSOC AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP ON GUINEA BISSAU VISITS GUINEA BISSAU

On 15 July 2002, the Economic and Social Council, by its resolution E/2002/L.12, decided to create advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict. The Advisory Group(s), which are expected to be small, flexible and geographically representative, have been mandated to examine the humanitarian and economic needs of a country concerned; review relevant programmes of support and prepare long-term programme of support, based on its development priorities through the integration of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development into a comprehensive approach to peace and stability, as well as provide advice on how to ensure that the assistance of the international community in supporting the country concerned is adequate, coherent, well-coordinated and effective and promote synergy.

In its decision E/2002/L.38 of 25 October 2002, the Economic and Social Council created an Ad hoc Advisory Group on Guinea Bissau. The group is chaired by Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo (South Africa). The other members of the group include Ambassador Lutzeria do Santos Jalo (Guinea Bissau), Ambassador Goncalo

Aires de Santa Clara Gomes (Portugal), Ambassador Dirk von den Berg (the Netherlands), and Ambassador Gelson Fonseca Jr. (Brazil). The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul (Mauritius), the Chair of the Group of Friends of Guinea Bissau Ambassador Crispin Grey-Johnson (Gambia) and the President of the Economic and Social Council Ambassador Ivan Simonovic (Croatia) also participate actively in the work of the Group.

Mandated by ECOSOC to prepare recommendations for a long-term programme of support for Guinea-Bissau, the Advisory Group visited Guinea-Bissau from 9-16 November 2002. During the visit the Group met with a wide range of actors in the country and participated in the Tripartite Consultations, organized by the United Nations and which included representatives of the Bretton Woods Institutions and the donor community. The Group also visited Gabu, one of the main towns in the interior of the country, for a first-hand look at two integrated projects being implemented by the United Nations system. During the visit it became clear that the country is facing many short-term challenges that need immediate consideration and that addressing the short-term needs would have an impact on the long term development plans for Guinea Bissau. The Group is finalizing its initial report to the Economic and Social Council to be submitted in early 2003.

NEW E-BOOK ON DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has released a new book on "Development, Health and Education", which is the outcome of the sessions which took place during the preparatory process and the 2002 High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council.

Chapter one reflects the political discussions during the Economic and Social Council High-Level Segment and the resulting Ministerial Declaration and includes the statements by the Secretary-General, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary of Treasury of the United States, the *High-Level Policy Dialogue* with the heads of International Financial and Trade Institutions and key background documents and summaries of Ministerial Roundtables organized during the segment. Chapter one also presents the outcome of the NGO forum organized on 14 June 2002 to allow for non-governmental organizations the opportunity to contribute to the debate of the Council, and contains contributions made by non-governmental organizations during the forum.

Chapter two begins with an overview of key issues in health and development. It notes the significance of increased investment in health as has been presented by the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health and outlines how the issue of health was addressed in recent major UN conferences and summits, notably the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico in March 2002, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development convened in Johannesburg, South Africa in August-September 2002. The chapter presents the debates during the Economic and Social Council preparatory roundtable held on 5 February 2002 on health and development and presents related good practices by various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Outlining the specific impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on development, the keynote address to the Council by Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, Director of Columbia University Earth Institute underlines the devastating consequences of HIV/AIDS for economic development in developing and transition countries. A number of good practices related to HIV/AIDS by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and Médecines du Monde International are presented. A special focus on Africa is provided by looking at efforts taken to meet health pri-

orities in Africa and consolidating community-level achievements for development.

Chapter three gives an overview of main issues related to education and development by exploring four areas of educational development: recruiting and training of teachers and educational personnel, the Education for All Campaign, technical and vocational education and higher education. It summarizes the debates of the Economic and Social Council preparatory roundtable on education and development convened on 14 February 2002 and presents a set of good practices and lessons learned on education and development by UNICEF, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), United Nations University (UNU), World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

Chapter four examines synergies between health and education for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, underlining that human development and poverty reduction are multifaceted and require cross-sectoral processes. The complementarities between health and education issues contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, including halving income poverty, or ensuring gender equality or reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS or creating decent and productive employment for young people. The Economic and Social Council preparatory roundtable on 5 March 2002 on education, health and development are summarized.

Chapter five consists of the Secretary-General's report on the theme of the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC. The Secretary-General's report was based on the inputs by the funds, programmes and agencies and reflects the conclusions and the consensus built during the three preparatory roundtables on health, education and the synergies on health and education.

A copy of the e-book can be accessed on the ECOSOC web site at:
(www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/).

ECOSOC PREPARES FOR SPRING MEETING WITH THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS

Preparations have started for the Spring meeting of ECOSOC with the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO, to be held in New York on 14 April 2003. The Bureau has circulated among all ECOSOC members a note containing general parameters suggested for the meeting, based on several internal discussions and informal consultations with the New York-based representatives of the World Bank and IMF. ECOSOC will continue to refine the details of format, content and outcome of the meeting in January. In the meantime, preparations are under way for two preparatory events, in the form of dialogue of interested UN Ambassadors and institutional stakeholders with NGOs representatives, on one hand, and business representatives, on the other. These are tentatively planned for next March.

ECOSOC HOLDS TWO RESUMED SESSIONS DURING FALL 2002

During its resumed session on 25 October 2002, the Council adopted a resolution on regional cooperation and two decisions, one on the newly-established Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and the second for the amendment of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

In the adopted resolution on regional cooperation (document E/2002/15/Add.4) the Council modified the medium-term plan of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for the period 2002 to 2005. In its action on the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, the Council decided that the Group would examine the country's humanitarian and economic needs, review its rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes, and submit a report by mid-January 2003. The Council also decided that, as an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict, the Group on

Guinea-Bissau would comprise the representatives of South Africa, Guinea-Bissau, Brazil, the Netherlands and Portugal, with South Africa's representative serving as Chairperson.

The Council, noting a decision made at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development to transfer the work of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development to the Commission on Sustainable Development, decided not to adopt a related draft decision on the provisional agenda for that Committee's third session, and to cancel that session, which had been scheduled from 9 to 20 December 2002.

The Council took note of two reports of the Secretary-General on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit (document A/57/75-E/2002/57). That report analyzes the three-tiered system of follow-up to conferences in 2001-2002, and looks at specific roles played by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council as well as its functional commissions. The Council also took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the role of public administration in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (document A/57/262-E/2002/82).

The Council deferred consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development until its 2003 session and of the Statistical Commission's report on its thirty-third session. Also deferred was consideration of the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its first session.

The Council elected Jordan, representing the Group of Asian States, to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development until 31 December 2004. It also elected Belgium, for the Western and other States Group, to a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2003. The Council elected China, for the Asian Group, to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, until 31 December 2004. Panama, rep-

representing the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, was elected to the Intergovernmental Working Group of experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting to a three-year term beginning 1 January 2003.

During the meeting, the Council also heard from a representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the ILO Forced Labour Convention.

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

SECOND COMMITTEE CONCLUDES DISCUSSION OF KEY ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PROPOSALS

On 11 December 2002, the Second Committee concluded its negotiation of some fifty draft resolutions on economic and financial matters. These resolutions cover a broad range of macro-economic issues, i.e. the international financial system, commodities, debt, eradication of poverty and globalization and also address financing for development, the environment and sustainable development, as well as the integrated follow-up to conferences. These were subsequently all adopted by the General Assembly.

On follow-up to conferences, one of the resolutions calls for the establishment of an open-ended ad hoc working group of the General Assembly to make proposals for a more integrated follow-up to conferences. The group will consider the work of the General Assembly and its Second and Third Committees to rationalize their respective agendas and to enable a more coherent approach to cross-cutting themes in conference follow-up and related reporting requirements. The working group will begin its work in January 2003 and will submit its report before the July session of ECOSOC.

Promoting an integrated and coordinated follow-up to UN conferences and summits including the Millennium Declaration is an important task, which has to take into account the ongoing reform process of the UN. Also, the link between financing for development and the internationally agreed development goals and objectives has to be further strengthened. Mr. Desai, who moderated, in November, a panel on the "Integrated Follow-up to Conferences - Millennium Summit, Doha, Monterrey, Johannesburg - and the Millennium Development Goals", noted that several influential conferences had been held during the 1990s, but those currently under discussion for follow-up had all occurred after 2000. While the conferences of the 1990s had focused more on policy development, the second generation of conferences has focused mainly on policy implementation. The question now is how to ensure the implementation of conference goals. The ad hoc working group of the General Assembly, once established, will address this question in a comprehensive manner.

PANEL DISCUSSION ON "MANAGING GLOBALIZATION"

On 1 November 2002, a Panel Discussion on "Managing Globalization" was held jointly by the Second and Third Committees, as an effort to promote coherence between the two committees in dealing with the impact of globalization on economic and social areas. The panel, which discussed whether the right institutions and capacities were in place to manage globalization, was co-chaired by the Chairman of the Second Committee Mr. Marco Antonio Suazo from Honduras, and the Chairman of the Third Committee Mr. Christian Wenaweser from Liechtenstein. The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Mr. Mark Malloch Brown moderated the panel, which included as panellists the Coordinator of Social Watch Mr. Roberto Bissio; the Executive Coordinator of the Secretary-General for the MDGs Campaign Ms. Eveline Herfkens; the Director of the Centre for International Fi-

nance and Governance and the Co-founder of the Jubilee 2000 campaign Ms. Ann Pettifor; and and co-author of "A Future Perfect: the Challenge and Hidden Promise of Globalization" Mr. Adrian Wooldridge from The Economist.

Mr. Adrian Wooldridge compared the current age of globalization with the first age of globalization, and, in particular, the post-9/11 situation with June 28, 1914, the day that triggered a succession of calamities after 60 years of economic growth and prosperity. Since 1914, it had been demonstrated that globalization was not inevitable and that it must be better managed. Rather than being written into the laws of technological innovation and comparative advantage, globalization was contingent on politics and international affairs. The post-9/11 world witnessed the fragility of globalization process. The 'synchronous sinking' of the world economy in 2001 whereby the U.S. stock market lost \$1 trillion in July and a slew of corporate scandals were exposed, signalled fundamental problems to engines for globalization. The pain was worse in Latin America whereby the financial crisis prompted political backlash against globalization in Argentina and Brazil. Signs of growing strains between the U.S. and Europe were seen over disagreements concerning Iraq and the Middle East, fuelled by unilateralist course of the U.S. on Kyoto Protocol, Anti-ballistic Missiles Treaties, steel and agricultural subsidies.

Mr. Wooldridge argued that the war on terrorism should be put at the centre of managing globalization. Although radical Islam had not posed political alternatives to capitalism and liberalism, threats of terrorism disrupt the movement of goods and people, imposing a high tax on trade. He also advocated addressing problems of globalization by pushing for more globalization e.g., drawing Arab countries into WTO, and highlighted the 'good news' of globalization (e.g., India and China). The economic evidence was overwhelmingly 'for' open economy. In the 1990s, despite the Asian crisis, GDP per person in the 24 more 'globalized' developing countries (i.e. those with a higher ratio of trade to national income, such as Mex-

ico and China), rose at an average rate at 5% a year, more than twice the rate in the developed countries; meanwhile GDP per person fell by 1% in the less globalized developing countries (many of which were in Africa). Literacy and life expectancy also rose in the 'globalized' countries.

Governments had a pre-eminent role to play in ameliorating the downside of globalization by ensuring transparency, rule of law and regulation of corporate governance. Western governments had an important role in coping with third-world poverty. Opening up trade to developing countries was necessary, but not enough, as "fair trade" often introduced protectionism in a hidden way, especially in agriculture and textiles, the two things most poor countries want to export. The West spent \$1 billion a day on agricultural protection, depriving the developing countries of market access. Managing globalization required a mixture of tough policies (such as defeating terrorism) and gentle policies such as forgiving third world debt.

Ms. Ann Pettifor recalled the 24 million petitions collected by Jubilee 2000 for debt cancellation, which led to a promise (yet to be delivered) by creditors to cancel \$100 billion worth of debt owed by 41 countries. She defined globalization as post 1970s economic transformation by which governments transferred huge power to markets to allocate resources and elevated the financial sector to have a dominant role in world economy. The flow of capital had been reversed and western countries became major importers of capital. According to Ms. Pettifor, this was due to U.S. pressure to dismantle capital controls to enable it to access foreign capital markets to finance its Viet Nam war deficit without making structural adjustments. She quoted Prof. Joseph Stiglitz who urged the reversal of capital flows from rich to poor countries.

Ms. Pettifor argued that trade only played a minor role in development because by 2000, 90% of international transaction was in the financial sector. Domination of the financial

sector had led to inflationary policies for assets and deflationary policies for labour and commodities. Reckless deregulation by central banks led to excessive lending, inflation of asset prices and created bubbles in technology stocks and properties. Through EU's Stability Pact, IMF's structural adjustment policies, Poverty Reduction and Growth Framework and other economic conditionalities, deflationary policies were imposed on developing countries which caused labour and commodity prices to fall. Deflationary policies led to transfer of assets to creditors from debtors. At the international level, they led to problems of capital flight, unfair terms of trade, increased debt repayments and reckless privatisation, contributing to global imbalances and instability. Political autonomy needed to be restored to governments; markets must be made accountable to elected, democratic governments, to end the insatiable need of corporate executives to satisfy the financial sector, as exemplified by the recent U.S. corporate scandals.

Regarding international financial governance, reforming international markets and creditors, rather than reforming financial institutions (which was a politically difficult and daunting task), was the way to manage globalization. Ms. Pettifor proposed the introduction of capital controls, Tobin Tax on speculative flows and an international insolvency framework based on Chapter 9 of U.S. legal code which allows governmental bodies to declare bankruptcy. The framework would be overseen by the UN, enhance participation by civil society and developing countries, be independent of debtors and creditors and be accountable to civil society. As an alternative to IMF's Sovereign Debt Restructuring Mechanism and previous IMF initiatives which had consistently failed, this framework would provide a simple, transparent process that would end moral hazards and injustice. It would introduce discipline to both lenders and borrowers, increase ownership, improve accountability and decrease corruption. The UN would appoint the members of an ad hoc panel which would determine the sustainable level of debt for sovereign debtor, linking this to achievement of the

MDGs. This framework would also lead to greater cooperation between the UN and IFIs.

Ms. Eveline Herfkens attributed the problem of globalization to the inability of international capital system to be managed for an equitable outcome at national and global levels. Poor institutions and bad policies, rather than globalization and technology, were to blame for poverty and failed development. More state involvement was needed to set and enforce rules of the game and to the necessary institutions and joint frameworks for action. Ms. Herfkens stressed that she was not advocating a global development framework with a 'one size fits all' approach, but that national development strategies should always be emphasized. In this regard, national governments had a major role to play in improving global governance and in establishing policies to deal with greater competition in world markets. She called for a new type of global governance and new alliances to bring in new partnership with private sector and non-profit organizations.

The increased cooperation between UN, BWIs and WTO was an embryonic form of global governance. Social dimensions were still not addressed enough, and the voices of the poor must be increased. There was scope to build on the current system which needed strengthening of coherence, democracy and compliance. Ms. Herfkens stressed that coherence started at home – among different ministries in capitals. It was no surprise that the inconsistency at home was being exported to the international system. Efficient international governance was being hindered by lack of coherence at national level. Ms. Herfkens urged not to give up on reforming the IFIs as the system was owned by countries themselves. Changing the election process of the representative on the Board (e.g., elect those with development background) could make the elected representatives more accountable to countries being represented by them.

MDGs had brought a new vehicle for promoting coherence between institutions. Reviews of the implementation of MDGs would examine

what was being done at international and national levels e.g., measure the outcome of WTO negotiations to see how it contributes to achieving MDGs. Monitoring of MDGs should not only focus on developing countries but rather be on mutual obligations. National governance was important, as reiterated in the Monterrey Consensus, and the prime responsibility to mainstream MDGs rested with national governments. At the same time, an enabling international environment had to be provided where there was good national governance. To address the democratic deficit in the system, parliaments must be brought into the picture to ensure governmental accountability in international affairs. In this regard, Mr. Malloch Brown pointed out that some Executive Directors of the BWIs were required to report to their parliaments on their voting practices – a subtle and less known reform issue.

To benefit from globalization, countries needed to open to international markets. But this also exposed them to greater vulnerability. Coherent policies in aid, trade and agriculture were needed. Ms. Herfkens argued that aid did not help in building institutions because governance could not be exported. OECD countries should trade, not aid, and open their markets, including in agriculture. Much remained to be done in reference to Doha, as trade was a means to an end as indicated in the Marrakesh Charter. The biggest compliance deficit concerned with the commitment to provide ODA equivalent to 0.7% of GDP. Serious commitments were made at Monterrey to finance development. It would be important to look at how progress was made in the area of MDGs under global partnerships. To increase democratic accountability and social responsibility of the private sector, greater transparency and reporting obligations were needed.

Mr. Roberto Bissio noted that during the pre-1914 era mentioned by Mr. Wooldridge, free trade prevailed at the cost of developing countries. Entrepreneurs conspired with one another and formed cartels to try to beat the market. Lack of labour mobility was a cause of poverty in Europe at the time. The difference between the first era of globalization and the current one

was the existence of the UN as a place with universal representation of governments, and legally binding human rights treaties. He stressed that the UN could not be absent from any global debate on policies dealing with globalization. The Millennium Declaration represented a new pact in the areas of debt, trade, aid, finance, human rights, democracy and social development. Governments and international institutions should take it seriously and measure outcomes, as globalization would not move forward without them. Independent monitoring by citizens such as the one provided by Social Watch was important to see whether the commitments made by Heads of States of both North and South were being implemented. He appreciated the opportunity given to NGOs in the GA to speak on these topical issues.

Free trade was hindered by subsidies – double standards undermined the credibility of the system. International agreements on capital controls were in the making to enable countries to make their own decisions e.g., the defeated multilateral agreement on investment, the proposals under General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Many of the MDGs dealt with service delivery by governments, but the way international institutions had been moving forward was contradictory. For example, in GATS negotiations, the World Bank framed the service sector in terms of clients and providers, and negotiated with governments as regulators. This framework made those sectors open for competition under GATS. Mr. Bisso also noted that too many rights were being given to TNCs without corresponding obligation, e.g., pharmaceutical industry and intellectual property rights.

During the question and answer session that followed the panel, comments were made by delegates regarding the reform of the decision-making process of IFIs, IMF's policy prescriptions, impact of religion in politics, international capital flows, UN involvement in insolvency issue, and corruption.

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
WORLD BANK PRESIDENT
JAMES WOLFENSOHN**

On 8 November 2002, the President of the World Bank James Wolfensohn delivered a keynote address to the General Assembly Second Committee. In his address Mr. Wolfensohn noted that cooperation among multilateral institutions was light years ahead of where it was six years ago, but confidence in the new joint pursuit of development was still lacking. He stressed that confidence must be built up among those bodies so that they could all work together in making the best use of existing resources. No single entity or group, be it the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the private sector or civil society, could act alone in tackling the big challenge of development, he added, speaking on the theme "Making it Happen: The New Multilateralism and its Implications for Development".

He said the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development and the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development had set forth a framework within which all nations could work. Developed nations had recognized the need to increase development assistance, open up their markets and tackle the question of subsidies, while developing countries had agreed to strengthen their capacities, improve their legal and judicial systems, combat corruption, and set up strategies to reduce poverty.

Emphasizing that development had become a shared responsibility, he said developing countries must take the lead in setting the priorities, adding that actions towards achieving their goals could not be dictated from outside. He warned that economic growth was not as assured as one might wish and noted that the United States, Europe and Japan were showing only modest gains. Growth had been observed in India, China and the Russian Federation, but Africa was lagging behind. He also pointed out that current crises like the Iraq question, the Middle East conflict and international terrorism posed considerable obstacles.

Responding to questions in the ensuing discussion, he told one delegate that trade and subsidies were the most important issues emerging from the Monterrey Conference. The \$50 billion in official development assistance (ODA) committed annually was a paltry amount compared with the \$300 billion spent on subsidies every year. The economic losses that developing countries suffered as a result of subsidies often cancelled out the foreign aid they received.

NEW SECOND AND THIRD COMMITTEE SERIES OF LUNCHEON DISCUSSIONS

During Fall 2002, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with a number of agencies/organizations of the United Nations system, as well as from civil society, organized a series of luncheon discussion meetings with the aim of contributing to the work of the Second and Third Committees of the 57th session of the General Assembly. The topics of the luncheon discussions covered a wide range of issues cutting across different areas of the work of the United Nations: "Follow-up to WSSD initiatives in the area of energy and technology"; "Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): water, sanitation and slum improvement – how to reach targets"; "Human rights and development: the challenge to poverty eradication"; "Achieving the MDGs: the role of rural development"; "ICT and development: a society for all ages"; "Aid accountability: a case for simplification and better cooperation"; and "The role of civil society in implementing the Millennium Declaration".

Co-chaired by Executive Heads of UN entities, or heads of civil society organizations, and UN Ambassadors, the luncheon discussions brought together representatives of Member States, UN system, civil society and the private sector in dialogues that provided an excellent opportunity for the participants to deliberate informally and in-depth on the selected subject matters as they related to the important work underway on the Millennium Development Goals and the follow-up to conferences and summits, including the recently concluded World Summit on Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development. Summaries of the luncheon discussions will be posted on the ECOSOC web site at (<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/>).

To see the electronic version of this newsletter complete with hyperlinks to further information, please visit:

<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/>

For further information on the work of the UN Secretariat in economic and social affairs see DESA News online at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/desanews.htm>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 28-31 January 2003 -- ECOSOC organizational session
- 20 March 2003 -- Meeting with NGOs in preparation for the ECOSOC meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions
- 21 March 2003 -- Meeting with business sector in preparation for the ECOSOC meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions
- 14 April 2003 -- ECOSOC meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions
- 27 April 2003 -- ECOSOC briefing for High-Level Committee on Programmes on MDGs
- 28 April 2003 -- ECOSOC meeting on MDGs
- 29-30 April 2003 -- Resumed ECOSOC organizational session
- July 2003 -- ECOSOC substantive session (Geneva, Switzerland)