

CLOSING STATEMENT

BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of a very intense and important high-level segment of ECOSOC.

I would like to thank all of you for having come and actively participated. Our work does not end here. As we continue to move forward with the pursuit for sustainable development and poverty eradication, we must maintain our focus and efforts in areas requiring urgent action.

Many of you stressed that the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration will not be realized without the enhanced participation and effective involvement of all stakeholders, including civil society. ECOSOC has taken a step forward this year by having the full involvement of civil society in all aspects of its work and direct inputs from the NGO Forum reported during the high-level segment.

In addition to the policy dialogue with the international financial and trade institutions, the panel discussions and various side-events, the high-level Roundtables and the Ministerial Roundtable Breakfasts have greatly

enriched the Council's deliberations and outcome. They brought together key stakeholders from Governments, civil society, including NGOs, academia and foundations, and the UN to discuss our common efforts to improve human resources, particularly in developing countries. They covered a wealth of topics over a three-day period ranging from the implications of food security, the link to sustainable development, the situation in Africa, shelter, regional cooperation, ICTs and gender mainstreaming. They have added depth – as well as informality- to our debate.

Our discussions were rich and lively. They gave a clear sense of direction on the way ahead for realizing internationally agreed goals for health, education and development. The Declaration you just adopted charts this same clear direction. The negotiations were protracted, but after Bali, it was important to signal that the spirit of compromise is still alive and well. I congratulate you all for reaching a rapid consensus on the Ministerial Declaration which sends out a clear and strong message of the centrality of human development to the goals of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It also embodies the full commitment of the United Nations and its family of organizations and the international community at large to place human beings and their well-being at the centre of international development cooperation.

We have come to recognize the dual role of human resources development – as a goal in its own right, and as a means to long-term economic growth and poverty eradication. We have acknowledged that human resources development, particularly health and education, must be

integrated into development policies at all levels. National ownership and capacity building are key in this regard, as is international development cooperation.

Our discussions shed new light on the importance of a multisectoral approach to human resource development. We have stressed that health, education, and progress in other sectors are mutually reinforcing. And we have recognized that this relation was important in designing and implementing development strategies. We have underscored that delivery of quality services in health and education needs to be strengthened.

There is a strong consensus on the need for gender mainstreaming in human resources development policies and programmes. Vigorous efforts to increase girls' education must be continued and expanded.

We must increase our efforts to combat diseases that disproportionately affect the poor. The fight against HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases is of utmost priority.

We have also highlighted the urgent need for mobilizing more domestic resource and international development assistance for effective programmes in human resources development.

The uncertainty of recovery in the world economy will pose a greater challenge, as discussed during the high-level policy dialogue with the Heads of international financial and trade institutions. It is clear that further progress in the areas of ODA, debt relief, trade and investment is needed to

create an enabling environment for development and generating resources for health and education services.

Trade represents the best opportunity for developing countries to realize their growth potential and achieve prosperity. It is a win-win proposition for developed and developing countries alike. The importance of market access to developing countries, especially in agricultural sector and sectors of export interest to developing countries, has been stressed, as well as the need for reversing protectionist signals from key trading partners and for equipping many developing countries to participate in the trade negotiations.

To close the funding gap, however, substantial increase in ODA is still needed. Recent announcements in Monterrey to increase ODA and the adoption of Africa Action Plan at the G8 Summit are encouraging signs that a new partnership is taking root and a positive inflection point has been reached in development cooperation. Following last year's high-level segment on Africa, ECOSOC has once again expressed its strong support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which makes good governance, sound policies and increased trade and investment its cornerstones. The international community must further support Africa's efforts.

Given the high expectations surrounding the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, it is important to note the commitments expressed by the delegations to make the Johannesburg Summit a success

and build on the momentum created by the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Ministerial Declaration.

The outcome of the high-level segment should mobilize coordinated action by the UN system for implementing the human resources development goals set in UN summits and conferences. ECOSOC will continue to play its part in strengthening coherence in implementation. This will be an important dimension of its work for the follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus and commitments.

In recent months, it has been often said, especially in the context of reviewing the progress made regarding the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits, that it is time for implementation. We must begin demonstrating that we mean what we say, as no time should be wasted; 2015 is approaching quickly. We should not change our targets, but we should be more reliable in the delivery of what we have promised.

In closing the high-level segment, I wish to once again thank all participants for making this segment a success.