



*Check against delivery*

**STATEMENT  
BY  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION  
New York, 25 July 2008**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It has been an honour and a privilege to preside over such an enriching session of the Council. Let me first thank you all for your hard work and participation in activities throughout the substantive session. My special gratitude goes to the four vice presidents for their able stewardship. I am also thankful to all delegations for their active participation in discussions and in creating a very conducive environment for the adoption of wide range of decisions and resolutions. I would also like to thank those who skillfully facilitated consultations to successful adoption of many important resolutions; and to the ever dependable Secretariat, whose tireless and effective support is no doubt appreciated not only by myself but all who participated in the session. Last but not the least, my special thanks to the interpreters for their hard work and for facilitating mutual understanding by building linguistic bridges.

It was truly a historic session, as it implemented the new functions of the Council in their entirety. It was remarkable to see the initiation of the Development Cooperation Forum. The Forum indeed constitutes one of the central pillars of the new, revitalised Economic and Social Council. I believe that we made significant strides in positioning the Council as the principal forum for global dialogue and policy review on the effectiveness and coherence of international development cooperation. The global representative character of the DCF indeed provides the Forum with a clear comparative advantage in reviewing progress in scaling-up, mutual accountability and in aid effectiveness.

I have captured main points of the informed and fruitful discussions in my official summary of the Forum, which you will find on the ECOSOC website. On my part, I have already forwarded this summary to the Chair of OECD/DAC and the Chair of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, with a view to informing the deliberations on the Accra Action Agenda. I have also forwarded the summary to the two facilitators of the preparatory process for the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development. I hope that the salient features of the summary will be reflected in the outcomes of these conferences.

I was pleased to see that the Council was able to contribute to the on going efforts to realize the goal of sustainable development by bringing different stakeholders together, by addressing emerging challenges such as climate change, rising food and oil prices, loss of biodiversity and most importantly, by adopting the Ministerial Declaration, full of determination in fighting these challenges and strengthening our actions towards sustainable development.

The exchange of information and lessons-learned at the National Voluntary Presentations during the AMR were, again, encouraging and significant. In particular, the participation by developed countries this year demonstrated the versatility of these presentations and was lauded by all. It is a step forward in promoting accountability in the fulfillment of international commitments in development cooperation. I would like to express my sincere gratitude again to the presenting countries. While volunteering developing countries shared their unique experiences in development, they agreed on one common theme - that the eradication of poverty could only be achieved by pursuing development, which is economically, socially and ecologically sustainable. Volunteering developed countries, on their part, acknowledged the gaps in their development cooperation strategies while highlighting successes with their development partners.

The vital role played by the Annual Ministerial Review, in particular the NVPs, was lauded by many. It is heartening to note that the momentum has continued. We already have eleven countries volunteering for 2009. As I have informed you in my letter dated 7 July, requesting countries to volunteer for 2010 and 2011. However, one of the things we have learned over the two-years' experience is that it is important to ensure balance between developed and developing countries and among regions. Therefore, I would like to reiterate a call for more developed countries to come forward to volunteer and request some developing countries already volunteered for 2009 to defer their presentations to 2010 or 2011.

Distinguished delegates,

Messages from the operational segment were clear and strong. There was a call for the urgent implementation of the guidance given by the General Assembly in its triennial review of operational activities – TCPR – in which we were all involved last year. I am very satisfied with an action-oriented and focused resolution you have adopted on this issue. It gives marching orders to the UN system in implementing TCPR and contains guidance on the resident coordinator system and on simplification and harmonization of the UN system on development cooperation. This outcome gives a clear recognition to the Council's role in exercising oversight on the work of funds and programmes in implementing the TCPR.

I was heartened by the support which Member States have expressed for the international humanitarian community emergency response and support. In particular, their support was unanimous in addressing the humanitarian impacts of the current major challenges. I thank Member States for recognizing and encouraging the ongoing strengthening of coordination processes of emergency humanitarian response, particularly on partnerships, funding and leadership capacity for the field.

I am pleased to see that the Council's role in peacebuilding and post-conflict development has been recognized and being promoted. The extension of the mandate of the Ad-hoc Advisory Group on Haiti is the evidence of confidence that Member States placed on the Council in its role of supporting the country's long term development. The Council is also making a step forward in building its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission by engaging in an informal discussion on how its work can enrich that of the Peacebuilding Commission, using the case of Guinea-Bissau as an example. This was an initial discussion, but we hope the discussion will continue as a way of further strengthening the ties between the two bodies.

I am encouraged by the stimulating and informative discussion that took place throughout the session with a range of roundtables and panels on a variety of topics. I would like to express my appreciation for the vital contributions made by different stakeholders to the discussions, including representatives from civil society, parliaments, local governments and the private sector. In all these panels and roundtables, the Council showed its ability and potential to bring the UN system together.

During this session, you clearly stressed that multilateral solutions and collective action was necessary to provide a secure and prosperous future for all. Developing economies and economies in transition face distress, as their financial prospects look murky. Meanwhile, progress in meeting the internationally agreed development goals is being threatened. Thus, the Economic and Social Council has to foster consensus-building to address these challenges.

The very rich discussions held during this session have generated a number of ideas and inputs for the two very important meetings of the General Assembly on Africa and MDGs, to be held on 22 and 25 September, respectively. I intend to draw the attention of the President of the General Assembly to the whole range of ideas that emerged from various segments of this session, which should be taken into account during the deliberations of the two GA meetings.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our work has been cut out for us. As we conclude this session of the Council, we must continue our effort for further strengthening the role of the Council. We have learned that early preparation is the key for a successful session of the Council. We must immediately start preparing for the 2009 session. This year, we have received valuable inputs from regional consultative meetings. I would like to appeal to countries to offer hosting regional meetings in preparation for the next year's AMR and for the 2010 DCF. I would also like to urge those countries volunteering for national presentation next year to start your preparations early.

But conclusion of the substantive session is not the end of our work. In the fall, I would like to focus on two important issues. Firstly, we have to respond to our mandate regarding adaptation of the working methods of the Council. I would like to convene a meeting to explore possible areas for further action. Secondly, we need to find ways and means to further strengthen the Council's oversight role on funds and programmes, as envisage in the TCPR resolution. I look forward to continuing our work with refreshed energy when we meet again in early autumn.

I wish you all a wonderful summer break that you all deserve.

I thank you.