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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

19 February 2013

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to enclose herewith a letter and its enclosure by H.E. Mr. Jan Grauls, Permanent Representative of Belgium and H.E. Mr. George Wilfred Talbot, Permanent Representative of Guyana, the Co-Facilitators of the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, concerning the informal meeting to be held on 20 February 2013.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.


Zdravko Ponos
Chef de Cabinet

To All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



New York, February 15, 2013

Excellencies,

The President of the General Assembly appointed us as Co-Facilitators to assist him in the further review of the implementation of resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council at its sixty-seventh session, as decided by the UN General Assembly (65/285).

For this purpose, a series of informal consultations have been held to enable sufficient consideration and agreement by Member States. After the five rounds which took place so far, time has come to turn our attention to concrete measures/decisions/recommendations with regard to "*the ECOSOC We Want*".

During the open-ended informal meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, February 20th at 10.30am in NLB 3, delegations will have an opportunity to share their views on possible deliverables. We apologize for the short notice, but this is the only date when a room is available this coming week.

In order to enrich our discussions we attach herewith some informal 'food for progress'. We would appreciate your delegation's active participation, at the highest possible level, at this meeting and look forward to a productive and lively discussion on *the ECOSOC We Want*.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of our highest consideration

Jan Grauls
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the United Nations

George Wilfred Taibot
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Guyana
to the United Nations

To
All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers

The ECOSOC we want
Meeting Wednesday, 20 February 2013

Food for Progress

General Remarks

The five informal rounds of consultations as well as the Secretary General's report provided us with a lot of food for progress. Time has come to turn our attention to concrete measures/decisions/recommendations with regard to 'the ECOSOC we want'.

The co-facilitators mandate was clearly set out in the PGA's letter of 29 November 2012.

As the co-facilitators see it, the outcome of the facilitation could be reflected in two ways:

- A report by the co-facilitators with a summary of the views expressed during the consultation process as well as a list of recommendations for action to be taken by ECOSOC proper (President, Bureau and/or Plenary) not requiring new GA legislation
- A draft resolution for action to be mandated by the GA.

As has been indicated before, this facilitation and the HLPF facilitation will continue to coordinate their programs on a regular basis.

General Trends

Without entering into detail, it can be noted that a number of trends emerged from the consultation process so far:

- The need for a more focused and relevant ECOSOC agenda with real added value
- The need to promote complementarity and to avoid duplication and overlap
- The need for more action- and solution-oriented outcomes of ECOSOC debates
- The desirability of having a well-chosen annual theme ('real world' issues), to be taken up by the entire ECOSOC-system¹, thus bringing better together the specific know how available within the ECOSOC architecture and taking account of the respective mandates
- A reminder that ECOSOC should use the existing possibility to react quickly on pressing issues (major events/crises) and show real responsiveness

¹ This would not preclude ECOSOC to continue to discuss other issues (taxation, public administration, narcotics, statistics ...) the subsidiary bodies would bring to ECOSOC's attention

- A better sequencing of activities by ECOSOC in order to make ECOSOC more relevant in the context of major initiatives/meetings within the UN-system
- An openness to revisit the segment structure, including the NY-Geneva alternation
- Insistence on keeping a strong focus on development issues
- Greater orientation/readiness to foster greater issue coherence
- Make full use of ECOSOC's convening power potential: develop ECOSOC as a forum where the wider UN development system, together with BWIs, WTO and other stakeholders can debate, cooperate and enrich each other's work.
- Consider holding meetings of ECOSOC on an ad hoc basis at other locations (eg. in Africa) to bring ECOSOC closer to those it serves.
- ECOSOC's key role in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of Sustainable Development (cfr. par. 84 Rio OD)
- ECOSOC's central role for a coordinated follow-up of the outcomes of major UN Conferences and Summits (cfr. par. 84 Rio OD)
- The realisation that there needs to be a clear link with the HLPF²
- Reaffirmation of the intergovernmental character of the work of ECOSOC, while improving stakeholder engagement.
- Full support for increased interaction between the ECOSOC Bureau/President and the Bureaus/Presidents of other bodies
- Encourage Funds and Programs and subsidiary bodies to produce executive reports, with a focus on issues related to the annual theme
- A call to the ECOSOC Bureau to better prepare important meetings

Possible Deliverables

A/ Recommendations requiring a new GA resolution

- Revise ECOSOC's substantive session and current segment structure. Consideration of sessions (Coherence, Integration, Development Week, High Level) as per proposed timeline attached
- Coordination and procedural issues (reviews and discussions of the reports of subsidiary bodies, procedural reports of the functional and regional commissions ...) could be dealt with throughout the year within resumed sessions
- Revisit NY/Geneva alternation of ECOSOC sessions
- Election of ECOSOC members to predate the election of the Bureau
- Election of ECOSOC Bureau to take place at the end of the HL session in July
- Define a platform to promote/discuss/support SIDS, LDC, LLDCs³
- Decision to have a more structured dialogue with BWIs, including through the annual meeting back to back with the BWI spring meetings
- Enhanced system-wide support for ECOSOC substantive Secretariat and improve its role
- A strengthened role for the AMR⁴ as a tool for integrated and coordinated follow-up through a preparatory process (through the Regional Economic Commissions) and improving implementation of agreed goals.

² To be defined in the context of the HLPF-facilitation

³ To be defined in the context of the HLPF-facilitation

⁴ To be defined in the context of the HLPF-facilitation

- Definition of a Development Week, with improved focus on the work of the Development Forum (on an annual basis , with a 'light' version every two years)

B/ Recommendations requiring an ECOSOC decision

From the ECOSOC Plenary

- Discuss and adopt a focused and streamlined ECOSOC agenda, including an annual overarching theme, to be proposed by the Bureau
- Discuss and adopt the work program of the newly elected Bureau
- Early election of the ECOSOC Bureau (July-July cycle)
- Align DCF and AMR themes with main theme of ECOSOC
- Request Funds & Programs/subsidiary bodies for more executive reporting, with a focus on issues related to the annual theme, in order to feed into each other's work and nurture overarching strategic discussions
- Request for reports by Funds and Programs/subsidiary bodies to be made available well in advance of the meeting in order to give ECOSOC sufficient time to prepare
- Improve the AMR preparatory process (through the Regional Economic Commissions) by focusing on a better dissemination of best practices/lessons learned (cfr. suggestion in the SG's report: Voluntary Mutual Reviews).
- Invite the Executive Boards and CEB to recommend to ECOSOC issues they would wish to be considered in a broader perspective (preferably at the joint request by different Executive Boards/CEB)
- Rationalization of resolutions
- Enhance the interface between CEB and ECOSOC
- Strengthen the involvement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders
- Enhance public private partnerships by upgrading the Partnerships Forum
- Deepening dialogue with young people by upgrading the Youth Forum

From the ECOSOC Bureau

- Establish a program of work at the beginning of their term in order to ensure synchronization with the wider UN agenda
- Take on a more proactive role in preparation of meetings, in regard to agenda-setting and in contacts with wider UN-system.
- Meeting ECOSOC Bureau and 2C/3C Bureaus at an early stage in order to:
 - discuss the respective programs of work (substance and calendars)
 - seek complementarities
- Maintain regular contacts, including informal contacts, with the Bureaus of Second/Third Committee and with PBC
- Regular meetings between the ECOSOC President and the President of the GA
- Early and in-depth preparation of the meetings with BWIs/Funds and Programs/subsidiary bodies, with a view to
 - agreeing at an early stage on dates of meetings and agendas
 - focusing on important and well-targeted items, related to ECOSOC's main theme.

- better coordinating the substance of the discussions
- Ensure more interactive debates where each organization uses its specific know-how to contribute to the specific focus areas
- Use of working groups/committees to assist the ECOSOC in preparing substantively for and addressing key issues
- In the margins of the formal meetings, encourage informal and flexible formats of interaction between representatives of BWIs/specialized agencies and ECOSOC
- Bring in a broader range of expertise and knowledge by making the right choices of speakers and participants (state and non-state, private sector, trade union, academics, think tanks,...)

From the ECOSOC Secretariat

- Increased cooperation across the UN Secretariat taking account of the functions of a reformed ECOSOC.
- As the central hub of support for ECOSOC, DESA should draw upon the resources from the rest of the UN system and call on members of the UN family to produce specific contributions.
- Broader support to ECOSOC through:
 - a better integration of the knowledge and expertise available within the wider UN-machinery
 - flexible secretariat structure in support of ECOSOC activities, taking account of the issues discussed.
 - Greater support for the President of ECOSOC

C/ Areas requiring further reflection

Issues raised during the facilitation process on which further discussion will be required

- Defining the link between ECOSOC/HLPF⁵
- Financing for Development issue⁶
- The question of the equitable geographical representation and the expansion of the ECOSOC Membership (requires Charter amendment)

⁵ To be defined in the context of the HLPF-facilitation

⁶ To be defined in the context of the Means of Implementation-facilitation

Possible Timeline

ECOSOC cycle

June-July

September-October

October-December

Election New Bureau

at end of HL session (election of ECOSOC members by the GA to predate election of Bureau – GA action required to make this possible)

- summing up of the work of the previous cycle
- identifying priorities/gaps to tackle in the year to come
- preparing of a Program of Work (PoW) by the new Bureau, to be submitted to the Council

Note: coordination and procedural issues (reviews and discussions of the reports of subsidiary bodies, procedural reports of the functional and regional commissions, ...) should be dealt with throughout the year within resumed sessions

= strategic planning

Meeting ECOSOC – 2C/3C Bureaus

(well in advance of the 2C/3C opening sessions)

- discuss respective proposed agendas and calendars
- seek complementarities/avoid duplication

= streamlining agendas and calendars

Preparatory Meetings ECOSOC Bureau with

- BWIs
- Funds & Programs
- subsidiary bodies
- other stakeholders (private sector/NGOs,...)
- ECOSOC President addressing 2C/3C

Discuss PoW/annual theme in ECOSOC plenary

= formal adoption

February-March

April

May

Coherence Session

(back to back with the board meetings of Funds & Programs)

- system-wide approach to implementation of development policy recommendations
- follow-up QCPR

= creating coherence within the UN-system through ECOSOC

Spring meeting with BWIs

(back to back with Washington spring meetings)

P.M. in April elections of the subsidiary bodies (unchanged)

Integration Session (*)

(consolidate inputs of relevant actors)

- executive reports, integrating:
 - main theme
 - March/April outcomes
- identify gaps/synergies
- recommendations with view to HL session

= recommendations on integrating the three SD-dimensions (Rio+20 tasking)

(*) link with HLPF to be defined

June

End of June/July

Humanitarian Session

building on existing practices

= annual humanitarian
'jamboree'

'Development Week' (feeding into HL Session)

Mobilizing support for
development through:

- DCF/DCF light (alternatively)

- AMR

- specific issues: poverty, youth,
eradication, inequality, LDCs,
LLDSS, SIDS

Followed by:

HL Session (*)

- validate ECOSOC's work of the
past year (with particular focus
on integrating 3 SD-dimensions)

- draw operational conclusions
for future work

- adoption ministerial declaration

= 'umbrella session'

(*) Possible link with HLPF to be defined

New cycle begins
with election of
new bureau