

## **Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA)**

**42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting  
17 October 2006  
New York**

**Chaired by Mr. José Antonio Ocampo**

### **Conclusions and further steps**

- Principals endorsed the proposals on enhancing ECESA processes (Annex) by Deputies.
- It was agreed that two entities, one global and one regional would normally lead thematic clusters. ECA offered to co-chair the cluster on gender mainstreaming, ECE - on sustainable development, ECLAC - on trade, ESCAP - on macroeconomics and finance, and ESCWA - on social development and social integration. Further consultations will be held on the participation of ECESA entities in co-chairing the thematic clusters. In this regard, UNDP was invited to make suggestions on a cluster it would wish to co-chair.
- Principals will examine the Deputies' proposals on substantive cross-sectoral issues to be addressed by ECESA and revert with feedback and suggestions.
- It was agreed that, at each regular meeting of Principals a substantive discussion will be held on the work progress and challenges of one of the clusters.
- It was agreed that the level of participation at Principals' meetings will be kept at the Head of entity level.
- Deputies will oversee clusters' consultations on the preparation of the Programme Budget for 2008-2009. Principals will meet in mid-December to review the situation, before the Programme Budget proposals are submitted to the Controller.

## Summary of discussions

### Enhancing ECESA processes

1. Principals had before them a Note on Enhancing ECESA processes, prepared by a process coordinated by Deputies.
2. The Convenor underscored major recommendations arising from the Note. One such recommendation aimed at identifying thematic clusters which present especially fruitful opportunities for cooperation efforts. Priority clusters as suggested by Deputies, included Trade, Macroeconomic and Finance, Sustainable Development; Social Development and Social Integration; and Gender Mainstreaming. The Convenor considered that Statistics, while an obvious priority area for collaboration, need not be included in this list because an effective system-wide network already exists in this area. Clusters which are considered as priority for collaboration would have to further define time bound tasks, products and themes on which to focus their work.
3. Other recommendations in the Note highlighted at the meeting related to the nomination of two co-chairs for each cluster, preferably one from a global entity and one from a Regional Commission; and to the desirability of strengthening the clusters' interface with Funds and Programmes, including by inviting them to participate in their work. For example, UNICEF could be usefully involved in the Social Development Cluster and UNFPA in the Population Cluster. The Convenor further suggested, and the meeting agreed, that each meeting of Principals should normally include an interactive discussion with one of the priority clusters.
4. In response to a question raised by UNDP regarding the selection of co-chairs, the Convenor suggested that not only regional but also global entities could offer serving as co-chairs. UNDP, for instance, could consider co-chairing the Cluster on Governance. He invited UNDP's proposals in this regard.
5. The Convenor noted that, following the expected adoption by the GA of its resolution on ECOSOC reform, the Principals would be expected to discuss how ECESA could best support the new functions of ECOSOC, particularly the Development Cooperation Forum and the Annual Ministerial Reviews.
6. The Convenor also referred to the Deputies' recommendation on the need for ECESA to collectively address selected substantive cross-sectoral issues, such as South-South cooperation; science and technology; energy; the effective implementation of the Monterrey consensus; and economic and social dimensions of post conflict peace-building. He suggested that the Principals review the inventory of proposals in the Deputies' Note and provide their feedback, including additional proposals.
7. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC expressed the Regional Commissions' concurrence with the Deputies' proposals. He indicated the specific clusters that Regional Commissions would be interested to co-lead: ESCAP (Macroeconomic and Finance); ECA (Gender mainstreaming); ESCWA (Social development and social integration); ECE (Sustainable development); and ECLAC (Trade).



8. The suggestion was made that “migration and population” be identified as another priority area. The Convenor recommended to limit, for the time-being, the number of priority clusters to five, and to revert to the issue of migration after the follow-up to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development is decided on by the General Assembly.
9. The Convenor raised the issue of the level of participation at ECESA Principals meetings. He felt that the personal participation of Heads of entities in the work of the Committee was essential to meeting its goals. The meeting fully concurred.
10. Principals adopted the proposals contained in the Note of Deputies on enhancing ECESA processes. Appreciation was expressed to Messrs. Patrizio Civili and Paolo Garonna for leading the preparation of the Note.

**Developments regarding UN reform, including the High-level Panel on System-Wide Coherence, the reform of ECOSOC and Peacebuilding**

11. The Convenor briefed the Principals on the status of negotiations of the GA resolution on ECOSOC reform. The issues of resources, relationship between ECOSOC and Peacebuilding Commission, and the timing of the Development Cooperation Forum were particularly difficult points in the negotiations. The G-77 was especially concerned that additional resources be allocated for the new functions of ECOSOC.
12. In reference to the GA resolution on development follow-up (res 60/265), the Principals had before them a table on the implications of the resolution. Many mandates given in the resolution are relevant to the work of ECESA entities, particularly as they relate to monitoring and the integrated follow-up to the global conferences. The Convenor stressed the importance of examining the Development Follow-up resolution in conjunction with the ECOSOC reform resolution and to maintain the momentum of ECOSOC reform by launching without delay preparations for the AMR and DCF. He also referred, in the same context, to work underway in DESA for the elaboration of a set of indicators to track progress on the development agenda, which would be shared with ECESA members.
13. The Convenor informed Principals of the Policy Committee decision on UN work in the area of Peace-building (decision no. 2006/33). Some ECESA member entities are involved in the Policy Committee’s Working Group chaired by UNDP on economic and social reconstruction elements of peacebuilding, including employment and reintegration. UNDP chairs the Working Group. The Working Group aims to review requirements and capacities and come up with a set of recommendations.
14. The Convenor stressed the role of ECESA in supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office.
15. The Convenor further noted that the High-level Panel on System-Wide Coherence would present its report to the Secretary-General on 9 November. The report focuses on the coordination of UN system work at the national level and the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, and is expected to contain proposals on several issues of relevance to ECESA work. Further, the report will include a proposal to convene

an annual meeting of 27 members of ECOSOC at the Head of Government level. This would raise the ECOSOC profile and strengthen its coordination role in the system.

16. The Secretary General's Chef de Cabinet recalled that the report was the product of an independent Panel and noted that the Secretary-General would transmit it to the General Assembly with his cover note. The Secretary-General is particularly interested in the CEB's review of the report. The SG Policy Committee would also study its recommendations.
17. A main emphasis of the Panel's recommendations will be on country level coherence, and on strengthening coordination of the UN system through "one office, one programme, one representative and one financial mechanism" at the country level. She hoped that the report would serve to enrich the debate on the UN development agenda and on ECOSOC reform, so that the Council may be strengthened as the central intergovernmental body for development. The report will also contain proposals to create a Sustainable Development Board reporting to ECOSOC, to enhance coherence in the governance of Funds and Programmes; and to establish a Development Policy and Operations Group (UNDPOG) geared to strengthening the link between analytical and operational work. The latter is intended to replace UNDG but is also highly relevant to the work of ECESA. Other important recommendations of the Panel relate to the strengthening of links between the UN and the Bretton Woods Institutions.
18. The Chef de Cabinet especially highlighted the importance of the Panel's recommendations on funding of development cooperation, and their relevance to the effort to restore the credibility of the UN as a channel for multilateral cooperation. The Chef de Cabinet also recalled that the Panel report would address, in addition to development, issues related to humanitarian assistance, environment and gender architecture, and would contain recommendations concerning the role of the Regional Commissions, focusing on their normative and analytical functions.
19. The UNDG Director expressed the view that the recommendation of the Panel concerning operational activities did not constitute a fundamental departure from existing approaches, as framed by the TCPRs. Rather, they would focus on ways, within current guidelines, to better deliver at country-level. UN system country level activities were perceived as fragmented, although the total amount of resources that went through the system was not negligible. At the same time, the multi-dimensional work of the UN system was recognized by the Panel as being of great value. Hence, the Panel's emphasis on enhancing the coherence of the system's presence at the country level.
20. Principals were briefed in the same context on the outcome of the UNDG Working Group on Non-Resident Agencies. The Working Group's proposals were now being translated into an implementation plan. All ECESA members are actively involved in the process which is aimed at finding ways to ensure that the expertise of the whole UN is brought effectively to bear on country level work. The implementation plan would be ready for approval by UNDG Principals at their meeting of 26 October.



**Preparations for the Budget for 2008-2009**

21. The Convenor recalled that the thematic clusters' involvement in the process of Programme Budget preparation over the last two biennia had proved very useful, both to identify opportunities for closer cooperation, particularly between global entities and the Regional Commissions, and to convey to Programme Budget reviewing bodies an image of UN-wide collaboration and coherence. The clusters were currently working to identify strategic areas for collaboration based on the existing strategic frameworks. Thereafter consultations would focus on actual programme outputs being proposed, in order to identify areas of possible joint activities and, more generally, to ensure the best use of the overall amount of budgetary resources allocated to the economic and social area. It was agreed that Deputies will oversee progress in this regard, and that Principals will review the status of play before Programme Budget proposals are finally submitted to the Controller (due on 15 December 2006).

-----