

Check against delivery

**Statement by Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**The Opening of the Fifty-First Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
New York, 26 February 2007**

Madame Chairperson,
Deputy Secretary-General,
Excellencies, and Distinguished delegates,

It is an honor for me to address the opening of the 51st session of the Commission on the Status of Women in capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council. I am also pleased to have this opportunity to assure you of the ECOSOC Bureau's full support for the continuous efforts of the Commission on the Status of Women to advance the international agenda on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Through its catalytic role the Commission on the Status of Women has made a major impact on the promotion of gender mainstreaming. Its significant contribution to the work of ECOSOC is evident in the adoption, in 1997, of the landmark "agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming" and the systematic follow-up of the agreed conclusions since then. The Commission has strongly advocated for attention to gender perspectives in other intergovernmental bodies, including the Council and its functional commissions.

It is highly appreciated that the Commission has been at the forefront of efforts to increase effective collaboration with ECOSOC and other functional commissions, including through its active participation in the panels of chairpersons of functional commissions during the substantive session of the Council. Since 2002, the Commission on the Status of Women has systematically provided input to the ECOSOC high-level segment.

Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies, and Distinguished delegates,

The Economic and Social Council is going through an important phase of change with the objective of increasing its maximum effectiveness as the United Nations principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and guidance on economic and social development issues. Its new architecture is designed to advance the United Nations Development Agenda. It creates new opportunities to provide the functional commissions of the Council with a stronger and unified voice. The Commission on the Status of Women, as the principal policy organ within the United Nations on gender equality and empowerment of women, should use the change processes to effectively strengthen its outreach to the country level.

In pursuance of paragraphs 155 and 156 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the new architecture of the Council will take effect this year. In the GA resolution 61/16 it is decided to maintain the current segment structure of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, but likewise to promote global dialogue, inter alia, through strengthening existing arrangements. Indeed, negotiations are on the way to build an enhanced high-level segment of the Council's substantive session, with the elements of Annual Ministerial Review, Global Policy Dialogue, Development Cooperation Forum and Thematic Debate. Therefore the inputs from functional commissions is expected.

In 2006 the Ministerial Declaration adopted at Economic and Social Council High-Level Segment unequivocally recognized that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are critical for achieving sustainable development and combating hunger, poverty and disease and should be the basis for the future work of the Council. Policy recommendations must, however, be translated into action: the Council's new mandate puts special emphasis on national-level implementation, which is in line with the focus of the new methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women.

This year's priority theme of the Commission, "Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child", I am sure, will contribute significantly to the Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council.

Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies, and Distinguished delegates,

I congratulate the Commission on the Status of Women on its new working methods with a strong focus on promoting and monitoring implementation at the national level, including through many interactive dialogues. The decision to review implementation of policy recommendations adopted by the Commission, after a period of two to three years, is particularly encouraging. I look forward to the outcome of the first of these reviews during this session, on implementation of the agreed conclusions on "the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality".

You will convene a panel on "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women" during this session in preparation for a consideration of this topic at the 52nd session. The outcome of this work by the Commission will certainly be of importance to the Development Cooperation Forum of the Council. I note with appreciation that the Commission on the Status of Women and the Statistical Commission will continue to collaborate this session in relation to the development of indicators on the girl child – this Commission's priority theme this year.

It is my appreciation that the Commission on the Status of Women is a functional commission with very committed participation of multi-stakeholders and non-governmental organizations that are contributing significantly to the issues addressed in this Commission and Council as well.

On this let me thank you and wish a productive session.