

**Economic and Social Council**

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Provisional summary record of the 40th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 July 2004, at 3 p.m.

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In the absence of Ms. Rasi (Finland), Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions

(d) Long-term programme of support for Haiti (E/2004/80)

(f) Ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict (E/2004/86)

1. **Mr. Khan** (Director of the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the long-term programme of support for Haiti (E/2004/80), said that, at its just-concluded informal meeting, the Council had heard statements by Mr. Pierre, Minister of Planning and the Environment of Haiti, and Mr. Guindo, Officer-in-Charge, United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator. He therefore saw no need to provide detailed background on the situation in Haiti.

2. The report of the Secretary-General provided an overview of that situation since the Council's previous substantive session, described the role of MINUSTAH and gave an overview of international assistance for Haiti, including the establishment of an Interim Cooperation Framework (to coordinate donor assistance and, possibly, substitute for an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Framework), the 2004 flash appeal and the integrated emergency response programme (IERP). It also emphasized the work of the independent expert of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Haiti.

3. Although those initiatives demonstrated the commitment of the international community to promoting national reconciliation and meeting development needs, if Haiti was to break the cycle of endemic poverty and stagnation, which was a cause of its political instability, it would need sustained, well-coordinated support. The Prime Minister of the transitional Government of Haiti had asked the Council to set up an ad hoc advisory group on Haiti to help coordinate long-term assistance. The Council must see that international efforts were properly followed up, to ensure a comprehensive approach encompassing political stability and socio-economic recovery.

4. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assessment of the ad hoc advisory groups of the Economic and Social Council on African countries emerging from conflict (E/2004/86), he recalled that the Council, in its resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002, had created a framework for such groups. Thus far, two had been established: one on Guinea-Bissau and one on Burundi. The report had been submitted pursuant to Council resolution 2003/50 of 24 July 2003, in which the Council had decided to assess lessons learned from such groups and had requested the Secretary-General to report on the matter.

5. Following the well-attended informal meeting held in May 2004 to assess the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, the Council had concluded that they had been successful in identifying lessons learned, fostering a partnership approach between the national authorities and international stakeholders and improving coordination within the United Nations system, in particular between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and, at the intergovernmental level, between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The report concluded that the ad hoc advisory groups held added value for countries, such as Guinea-Bissau and Burundi, which were not always in the forefront of international attention, since they fulfilled advocacy and coordination functions. The Council might wish to build on the Advisory Groups' experience when addressing similar situations elsewhere.

6. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa), Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, introducing the supplementary report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau (E/2004/92), said that the Council, at the beginning of the 2004 substantive session, had recognized the special needs of least developed countries emerging from conflict and had called on development partners, multilateral bodies and the international financial institutions to work with those countries to integrate efforts to mobilize resources with efforts to achieve peace and stability.

7. Only two weeks previously, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau had taken part in a joint mission to that country with the Security Council and had concluded that Guinea-Bissau had turned a new page since the joint mission of one year before. A team of international observers had deemed its 28 March

2004 legislative elections free, fair and transparent and the results had been accepted by all political parties. The Group felt that the conditions set for the country by the international community had been met, and was optimistic about the future. That optimism was based not only on the successful elections, but also on the steps taken towards restoring constitutional order and re-establishing international economic and financial confidence.

8. The Government was committed to improving governance, transparency and accountability in the public administration and to appointing senior officials on the basis of merit, thereby contributing to institutional stability. The Treasury Committee, of which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was a member, scrutinized revenue collection and expenditure within the Ministry of Finance and had produced a rapid improvement in resources and the Government's ability to pay salaries. The Group felt that the Government's good management of domestic and overseas funds should be rewarded.

9. The Emergency Economic Management Fund, run by UNDP, had attracted contributions from Brazil, China, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the members of the West African Monetary Union, but a substantial shortfall remained. The Group strongly urged bilateral and multilateral donors to fund the remaining gap in the emergency budget, whose purpose was to keep the Government functioning at a minimum level, without any provision for paying salary arrears or internal debt, including debt to the private sector.

10. The Group considered that Guinea-Bissau needed official development assistance (ODA) to rebuild its agricultural, social and economic infrastructure, and private investment to relaunch its economy. The armed forces must be restructured into a professional service by improving working conditions, to prevent a relapse into conflict. The International Monetary Fund was thinking of reviving its Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility and the World Bank had demonstrated its confidence in the country through its new Medium-Term Strategy. Both institutions had emphasized that their own programmes could not succeed without the strong and active engagement of the donor community.

11. Guinea-Bissau remained a fragile country in a fragile subregion. The country's stability would depend on the creation of jobs and economic growth. Africa as

a whole was not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, but Guinea-Bissau, whose position in the UNDP Human Development Index had fallen still further in 2004, was even more unlikely to reach that target. The joint mission had concluded that political, economic and social developments must continue to be monitored and supported, and the Group's report had made specific recommendations for the Council's consideration. The Group had been encouraged by the cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council demonstrated by two successive joint missions to Guinea-Bissau. The resulting approach encompassed both security and economic issues.

12. Reporting orally on the activities of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, he said that two recent developments in the involvement of the international community had helped to support Burundians' efforts to restore lasting peace and bring about national reconciliation. The first had been the January 2004 forum of partners for development organized in Brussels by UNDP and the Government of Belgium, which had resulted in commitments to provide US\$ 1,032 million. The second had been the decision by the Security Council on 21 May 2004 to authorize the United Nations Operation in Burundi, which would contribute to maintaining stability through its responsibility for disarmament and demobilization. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group and Ms. Carolyn McAskie, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of ONUB, had agreed that close interaction was needed to facilitate support for development, peace and security in the country.

13. The Group urged donors to disburse as rapidly as possible the funds they had promised and stressed the relevance of an overall "road map" to link together the various development programmes launched, as proposed in the final communiqué of the forum of partners for development. There had been progress in debt relief and balance-of-payments support: the African Development Bank and the Burundian authorities had established a plan to clear the country's arrears, France and Italy had cancelled bilateral debt and Belgium had provided 4 million euros to support the balance of payments. Various partners, including Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the European Union, the World Bank and UNDP, had provided assistance in the area of governance. The Group emphasized that faster progress must be made in order to respect the

terms of the Arusha Agreement and proceed with elections as planned.

14. United Nations agencies had also made progress, with the UNDP Executive Board approving the country programme document for 2005-2007, on the basis of the interim poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had also adopted a country programme for Burundi.

15. Since the efforts described still fell far short of what Burundi needed, the Group wished to reiterate its call to the donor community to provide resources, including contributions to the Multilateral Debt Trust Fund established by the World Bank. The country was at a crossroads, and the efforts of the Government and the people must be matched by strong international support and a framework of true partnership.

16. A major achievement of the two Ad Hoc Advisory Groups had been their ability to play a strong advocacy role for countries that tended to be on the margin of major international assistance channels. They provided a flexible and unbureaucratic platform for the relevant national authorities, the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other organizations to mobilize support. The concept of "partnership" between the countries and the international community remained paramount.

17. That positive interaction had improved coordination among United Nations bodies, particularly the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, contributing to a holistic approach which addressed both security and development issues. The Ad Hoc Advisory Groups had also played a pivotal role in enhancing the overall United Nations response capabilities for countries emerging from conflict — an important step, since research had shown that half of the countries that emerged from conflict relapsed into civil strife within five years. By strengthening the relationship between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups had helped to find a way forward for countries in situations which the usual mechanisms often did not cater for. Despite their success, the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups required operative and substantive support from the United Nations system in order to function as well and as smoothly as possible. In that connection, he wished

to urge the Council to take a definitive decision to achieve that aim.

18. **Mr. Pierre** (Observer for Haiti) said that, with a population of eight million and a per capita gross national income of US\$ 440, Haiti was classified among the least developed countries. In addition, the prolonged political crisis had led to the freezing of international loans and foreign investment, which had further weakened the scant existing economic infrastructure. In response to Haiti's appeal for assistance, the international community had developed and implemented the long-term programme of support for Haiti and the United Nations had deployed MINUSTAH.

19. The Transitional Government in Haiti was working to create a security climate conducive to investment, economic and social recovery and the eventual holding of free and democratic elections before the end of 2005. To that end, on 19 July 2004 in Washington, it would present its Interim Cooperation Framework and meet with representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions and other stakeholders in order to determine the best way to attract new investment.

20. International aid to Haiti had resumed on the basis of an UNDAF, which was designed to cover the transition period until September 2006. However, it was essential to develop a much longer-term programme to be implemented in parallel to the activities of MINUSTAH. In that connection, the Government of Haiti called on the Council to play a part in coordinating that programme and suggested that particular attention should be paid to property rights, education, economic liberalization, conservation and infrastructure. The Government also supported the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti to oversee the achievement of the longer-term objectives.

21. **Mr. Al-Mahmoud** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, shared the view that a long-term effort and a renewed international commitment were needed to rebuild the economic and social structure of Haiti and assist the Haitian people to build and strengthen institutional capacity. In that regard, it was clear that the existing programme of support for Haiti needed to be reinvigorated so that the long-term programme of support would accurately reflect the current situation.

22. Security Council resolution 1542 (2004) emphasized the need for Member States, United Nations organs, bodies and agencies and other international organizations, in particular the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community, other regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations to continue to contribute to the promotion of the social and economic development of Haiti, in particular for the long term, in order to achieve and sustain stability and combat poverty and urged all those stakeholders to assist the Transitional Government of Haiti in the design of a long-term programme and development strategy to that effect.

23. The Group of 77 and China took the view that the Council must heed that call, and indeed the request of the Transitional Government, by reinforcing the implementation of the long-term programme of support launched in its resolution 1999/11, and it therefore proposed the reactivation of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. Building on the results achieved so far, and with a view to providing advice on further action needed to respond to the present challenges in Haiti, the Advisory Group should be mandated to examine humanitarian and economic needs, review relevant assistance programmes and prepare recommendations for a long-term programme of support based on the development priorities of the country through the integration of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development into a comprehensive approach to peace and stability. The composition of the Advisory Group should be limited yet flexible, allowing for the participation of countries that could make a positive contribution to its work. It should also seek to coordinate with the Core Group established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1542 (2004) in order to avoid duplication and promote synergy.

24. **Mr. Hamburger** (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), said that African countries emerging from conflict should be among the highest priorities of the United Nations system and, in that context, welcomed the establishment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi and Guinea-Bissau. They had produced a new

synergy in the relations between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council and had overcome an institutional vacuum, leading to a more holistic and coordinated involvement of the United Nations system in efforts to achieve longer-term political stability and societal well-being in the countries concerned. It was ineffective to pursue post-conflict peace-building in the absence of economic and social development or to pursue economic development outside a clear political framework of good governance and thus, since security, governance and development were inextricably linked, the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups should be viewed in the broader context of ongoing discussions within the United Nations intergovernmental machinery on promoting a coherent international response to countries in crisis.

25. The Secretary-General's report clearly recognized the potential of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups to add value. It detailed important lessons learned about their operating mechanisms and the European Union fully shared the conclusion that the effectiveness of their work was greatly enhanced with ownership. In order to maintain that effectiveness, the groups should remain small, representative and balanced. To further improve their work, the interaction between the Advisory Groups and the Economic and Social Council could be strengthened. There was scope for more substantive discussion by the Council of the reports of the Groups, which would not only enhance the involvement of the intergovernmental machinery during the transition phase but would also allow the Council to learn lessons from those country-specific examples and subsequently offer policy guidance to the United Nations system. Similarly, collaboration between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council could also be strengthened in areas where both bodies had a role to play, thereby minimizing the risk of transition countries slipping back into conflict.

26. The mandate of the Ad Hoc Groups allowed them to play an important advocacy role on behalf of the countries concerned. They were mandated to review humanitarian and economic needs and relevant assistance programmes and to make recommendations for the long-term programmes of support on the basis of their development priorities. It was important to monitor progress made at the country level and to gauge the operational impact of the work of the Groups to ensure that those objectives were met. The contribution of the Advisory Groups to the

achievement of a more effective, coordinated and integrated response from the United Nations was essential.

27. The Advisory Groups were also mandated to provide advice on how to ensure that the international community provided adequate, coherent, well-coordinated and effective assistance to the countries in question. In that connection, the European Union supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that they should liaise more directly with the donor community in order to maximize the mobilization of funds. The partnership approach was an essential element of the work of the Advisory Groups, since it determined not only the relationship between the international community and the country concerned but also the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council and between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. The European Union was in favour of a closer partnership between the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups and the operational agencies involved in post-conflict situations, both in the field and at headquarters level. Furthermore, the Advisory Groups should also draw lessons from the generic policy recommendations of the Joint Working Group on Transition Issues.

28. The Advisory Groups were an interim arrangement serving a specific purpose and, as such, their lifespan should remain limited. The European Union did not support the development of generic "sunset criteria", believing that decisions on the lifespan of the Groups should be linked to regular assessments carried out by the Council. Nevertheless, it was important to take the issue of limited lifespan into account when discussing the proposal to increase the financial and human resources allocated to the Advisory Groups. There was a need to strike a balance between adequate administrative and technical support, flexibility and prudent financial management and, in that regard, closer collaboration with other United Nations system entities would allow the secretariats of the Groups to benefit from broader knowledge and expertise and avoid duplication of work.

29. **Mr. Neil** (Jamaica) said that, in view of the success of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, his delegation was in favour of renewing their mandates. With regard to the potential involvement of the Council in Haiti, he welcomed the relevant report of the Secretary-General, although he felt that parts of it could have been better formulated.

The situation in Haiti was clearly critical and had been exacerbated by the country's historical difficulties and a number of recent natural disasters. In the past, the international community had not supported Haiti in a sustained manner, but the current macroeconomic instability was ample justification for involvement by the Economic and Social Council.

30. The key elements of the long-term programme of support were institution-building, job creation, energy generation and the strengthening of productive capacity. The programme must be country-driven and based on the specific realities of the Haitian experience. In that connection, Jamaica supported the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, since it had an important role to play in mobilizing support for and facilitating the implementation of the long-term programme of support. It should cooperate with other United Nations entities to ensure that assistance to Haiti was coordinated and sustained. Lastly, given that the flash appeal had failed to reach its fund-raising target, he appealed once again to the donor community to continue providing financial aid to Haiti.

31. **Mr. Sunaga** (Japan) observed that the Transitional Government of Haiti was making every effort to restore stability and reconstruct the nation. Japan had responded to the flash appeal with US \$2.5 million of food aid; it had also provided a total of \$320,000 in emergency assistance after the floods in May 2004. Its total ODA to Haiti so far amounted to \$140 million, in addition to food and assistance to increase food production and address basic human needs. His Government therefore wondered why there was no reference to Japan's ODA in the Secretary-General's report (E/2004/80). Japan would make an announcement regarding future aid to Haiti at the donors' conference to be held the following week.

32. Turning his attention to Africa, he said that the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi had been established at an opportune moment, with a view to mobilizing donor support and coordinating activities among stakeholders. Japan particularly appreciated the work done by the Advisory Group on Burundi. The active involvement of the Government of Burundi in the activities of the Group had illustrated once again that ownership was the key to development. Peace in Burundi was essential to the stability of the Great Lakes region, and the peace process in that country was in a critical phase. As part

of its efforts in the region, Japan had actively provided assistance for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration, and refugees. The Government of Japan had encouraged the development process in Burundi through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. It hoped that such efforts would promote a seamless transition from the emergency assistance period to the development period in post-conflict areas.

33. **Mr. Stanislavov** (Russian Federation) said that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi had been useful and effective instruments for peace-building and conflict prevention. The Groups were important mechanisms for providing assistance to the States at the initial stages of post-conflict recovery, when the situation prevented them from obtaining aid through regular channels, and had helped to promote constructive dialogue between each of the countries and the Bretton Woods institutions. Moreover, the Groups had streamlined cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, particularly in connection with post-conflict situations where political and economic issues converged. It was therefore important for the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups to continue cooperating with the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa to improve coordination between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The Economic and Social Council should give further consideration to the experience that the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups had had with the transition from relief assistance to rehabilitation and development. It was also important to bear in mind that the Groups were tailored to address specific situations. They should not be replicated too freely, because a proliferation of ad hoc advisory groups would run the risk of overlapping with the existing mechanisms for assisting post-conflict countries. A balanced, pragmatic approach was required that took into account all aspects of situations in post-conflict countries. There was a need to consider the scale and nature of the field presence of the United Nations in individual countries as well as the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms for coordination and mobilization of donor assistance.

34. His delegation supported the broad-based and multifaceted efforts of the international community to provide Haitians with the necessary assistance to normalize the situation in their country, and to that end

the international community must clearly continue to provide comprehensive and timely humanitarian, economic, financial and technical assistance. International assistance and also the use of multilateral mechanisms to provide and mobilize such aid could lay the basis for countries to follow the path of recovery and sustainable development.

35. **Mr. Filho** (Observer for Brazil) stressed the need to address Haiti's long-term economic and social needs with measures that would add value to existing mechanisms. Brazil was firmly committed to working to that end, as witnessed by the participation of its forces in MINUSTAH. With respect to the conclusions of the Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, he aligned his delegation with the statement made by the Chairman of that Group: sustained support from the international community was needed to preserve progress achieved so far and to allow the country to advance towards sustainable development with stability. In that connection, he recalled the recommendations contained in the final paragraph of the Group's supplementary report (E/2004/92).

36. **Mr. Owuor** (Kenya) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Advisory Groups had put a necessary spotlight on the situation in the two countries, and it was imperative to provide them with the resources to enable them to function effectively. His delegation commended the new Government of Guinea-Bissau for its recommitment to the partnership approach and the Transitional Government of Burundi for its commitment to peace. In spite of the good work of the Groups, the response of the international community had not met expectations. His delegation strongly believed that the two countries needed support to prevent them from backsliding in their progress towards peace and sustainable development.

37. **Ms. Tamlyn** (United States of America) said that she would focus her remarks on Africa. For countries that had no strong in-country presence, ad hoc advisory groups provided a real-life reference point on coordination and cooperation and a better understanding of complex issues, which assisted the Council in fulfilling its oversight functions. However, after reading the Secretary-General's report she considered that more precise information was required on the way in which such groups improved United Nations coordination activities. Care was needed when

drafting the mandates of the groups, to avoid any overlap with other elements of the system, and when an advocacy role was assigned. Moreover, all mandates must have clear benchmarks and success criteria, as well as a transparent exit strategy. Finally, more time was needed to study the existing groups, so that outstanding issues might be resolved before new groups were created.

38. **Mr. Briz Gutiérrez** (Guatemala) noted that the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi and Guinea-Bissau had proved useful by taking on a proactive role in mobilizing international cooperation and collaborating with national authorities on strategies and policies. Such positive results had been achieved, in part, because the Groups were small and therefore agile. Above all, their members had been selected in close consultation with the countries concerned. The mechanism had strengthened the link between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council and deepened cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. Finally, it had been wise to approach the question cautiously: had too many ventures been undertaken simultaneously, the results might have been less satisfactory. Nevertheless, the Council should not be overly rigorous in excluding countries from the new mechanism on the grounds that they lacked capacity or resources.

39. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia) praised the Advisory Groups for what they had achieved, in a relatively short time, in assessing the needs of Burundi and Guinea-Bissau and recommending long-term programmes to support the transition from relief to development. Their recommendations deserved serious consideration. Although he welcomed the positive developments in Guinea-Bissau, he noted with concern that the Emergency Economic Management Fund had received only US\$4 million of the projected \$18 million, and called upon the donor community to bridge the gap in funding. He urged the international community to support the presidential elections scheduled for March 2005, and the International Monetary Fund to resume its programme without further delay. In the case of Burundi, Namibia welcomed the Transitional Government's efforts to improve the situation in the country; it also welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Operation in Burundi. He noted with concern that the pledges made at the Forum of Development Partners for Burundi, held in Brussels in January 2004, were not being met. He urged the

Council to provide more support for the Advisory Group on Burundi, and to extend the mandate of the Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau to allow time for the implementation of its recommendations to be monitored. Finally, turning to Haiti, he noted that very little had changed for the better in that country since 1999 and voiced his delegation's support for the reactivation of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

40. **Mr. Ruiz-Rosas** (Observer for Peru) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China with regard to Haiti. Speaking from a national perspective, he said that his Government had been following the situation closely and was committed to contributing to the economic and social reconstruction of the country and the restoration of democratic institutions. Accordingly, 200 Peruvian nationals were participating in the stabilization force established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1542 (2004). The Secretary-General's report (E/2004/80) described dramatic conditions that required serious remedial measures, and his delegation fully supported the recommendations contained therein. Unified action between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council was necessary to achieve long-term development and the protection of human rights. His delegation welcomed the initiative to reactivate the Ad Hoc Advisory Group and hoped that the forthcoming international donor conference would succeed in meeting the goal of \$924 million needed to implement the cooperation programme during the next two years. Finally, regional and subregional actors had a role to play in helping to stabilize the political situation in Haiti and should collaborate in the effort to achieve national recovery.

41. **Mr. Leslie** (Belize) said that his delegation aligned itself with the Group of 77 and China in support of the extension of the mandate of the Advisory Groups for Guinea-Bissau and Burundi. Turning to Haiti, he welcomed the insight provided by the representative of Jamaica into the challenges facing that country and asserted that the revitalization efforts should be centred on its people. It was appropriate for the Council to take an active role to assist Haiti in the design of a long-term development strategy to promote social and economic development. To that end, the reactivation of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group would foster national and international cooperation and coordination. His Government held that Haiti's

sustained well-being must be built upon the return to constitutional democracy and the restoration of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

42. **Ms. D'Alva** (Observer for Guinea-Bissau) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It was grateful that the Council had decided to hold a discussion on the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi. The people of Guinea-Bissau had remained strong in spite of the debilitating conflict and they hoped soon to find long-term peace and political stability, the first phase of which had been reached with the holding of legislative elections. The second stage would come when presidential elections were held in 2005. Nevertheless, the social and economic situation was still critical, and her country needed all the support of the international community and the continued involvement of the United Nations through the Advisory Group. There was much to be gained from the continued participation of the Group; with its support, all parties would remain focused on their obligations and Guinea-Bissau would continue to make progress.

43. **Mr. Rojas** (Chile) noted that he would focus his observations on Haiti, where his country was involved in humanitarian work and in MINUSTAH. Within its own financial limitations, Chile had taken steps to improve the conditions of Haiti's people. It was important for the international community to have a long-term strategy to assist Haiti, and his country would join any long-term initiative.

44. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa), Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, said that there was nothing more humbling than to witness the excellent work which the staff of United Nations agencies on the ground in Burundi and Guinea-Bissau were performing in extremely difficult conditions. He also paid tribute to the people of Guinea-Bissau who had welcomed the Blue Helmets as they arrived in the country to help in preparing for the elections. Advisory groups such as the one in Guinea-Bissau should remain ad hoc and should function according to the situation on the ground.

(a) **Reports of coordination bodies** (E/2004/67)

(c) **International cooperation in the field of informatics** (E/2004/78)

(e) **Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system** (E/2004/59; E/2004/CRP.1-4)

(g) **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force** (E/2004/62 and Corr. 1)

(h) **Tobacco or health** (E/2004/55)

45. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) said that the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2003 (E/2004/67) could not fully capture the extent to which inter-agency cooperation was becoming an integral component both of the day-to-day work of individual agencies within the United Nations system and of the policy advice that the Secretariat offered in its reports to the central intergovernmental bodies, particularly the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. Practically every report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Council and its subsidiaries was an inter-agency product. Those reports, as well as the CEB reports, should be the basis for the Council to assess the intensity and impact of inter-agency coordination.

46. The CEB overview reports tried to convey what the organizations of the United Nations system understood to be the objectives and priorities that should guide inter-agency cooperation and captured some of the main messages that the executive heads, collectively, were transmitting to their staff. To convey such general indications meaningfully, the overview reports must be up-to-date. CEB had therefore covered, in the present report, the fall session of 2003 and the spring session of 2004.

47. The report dealt with: first, the ongoing efforts to address systematically the response of the United Nations system to different dimensions of the Millennium Declaration; second, the growing coincidence between the main policy concerns dominating intergovernmental work, particularly the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, and the main issues on which the Board was focusing its attention; third, the policy development and programme coordination work that the Board has been pursuing on the so-called triple crisis: HIV/AIDS and

its linkages with food security and governance; and, fourth, the efforts to develop a common managerial culture within the United Nations system to underpin programme coordination.

48. Following the Millennium Declaration, the two most promising trends in the work of intergovernmental bodies had been progress towards integrating the follow-up to conferences and the renewed focus on implementation. The Council and CEB had sought to ensure that conference follow-up processes would bring about mutual reinforcement rather than duplication of effort. The International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey and the World Summit on Sustainable Development had both facilitated and complicated that objective. Both were crucial for advancing the Millennium Development Goals, yet difficulties persisted. One of the major challenges for the Council and CEB in preparing for the 2005 comprehensive review of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration would be to preserve the remarkable simplicity of the Goals while ensuring that the major contributions that the conferences of the 1990s, as well as those in Monterrey and Johannesburg had made were fully exploited. The Council must be given a direct role during the 2005 follow-up to the Millennium Summit in monitoring the further implementation of the development aspects of the Millennium Declaration.

49. The way it chose to exercise that role would be crucial in shaping the future interaction between the Council and CEB. The Council's choice of cross-sectoral themes for its coordination segments would also affect its interaction with CEB. In the same way that the Secretary-General's road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration had provided the basic framework for the CEB work programme for the past four years, the multi-year work programme to be adopted by the Council would have a major impact on shaping the CEB agenda in the years ahead. The annual reports of CEB could provide a useful backdrop for the work of the coordination segment. The Council could devote a day to a broader review of the state of coordination within the system in the light of the CEB annual reports and engage in a dialogue with different groups of executive heads — for example, the social agencies one year, the food agencies the second and the infrastructure agencies the third — so that over a three-year period all of the

organizations of the system would have engaged directly in a dialogue with the Council.

50. Another important intergovernmental trend was the renewed emphasis on implementation, which was evident in the selection of themes and the Council's treatment of them, and, increasingly, in the work of the Council's functional commissions, chiefly the Commission for Social Development. Implementation was basically what CEB brought to the Council. As the Council machinery focused on implementation, CEB and the Council would increasingly be speaking the same language, the outcomes of intergovernmental processes would have a more direct impact and meaning for the work of the agencies and the results of coordination would become a built-in, integral part of the Council's dialogue in the system.

51. Lastly, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had made thoughtful observations during a productive discussion in June 2004 on the CEB report that would be very helpful to the Council, as they contained precious guidance for the future work of the inter-agency system.

52. **Mr. Khan** (Director of the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination) said that the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, which represented governments, the private sector, civil society, non-profit organizations and multilateral organizations, had focused on using information and communication technologies (ICT) to help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The second annual report of the ICT Task Force revealed a shift in the digital divide that had emerged within a number of countries and regions lagging behind. Mobile telephony and wireless technologies were spreading rapidly, particularly in Africa, where fast growth in mobile telephony was creating interesting leapfrogging effects and possibilities of bypassing traditional technologies and conventional solutions. The average level of Internet and mobile phone penetration in the developing world in 2002 was equivalent to the level reached in the developed countries around five years earlier. 2002 had been the first year in which the number of mobile phones overtook fixed-lines worldwide. In some African countries, the level of mobile phone penetration was 10 times higher than fixed-line penetration. More Africans had become telecommunication users in the first few years of the twenty-first century than in the previous hundred years.

53. Despite some positive trends, the task of bringing the benefits of ICT to the developing world was far from being properly addressed, as recognized at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society held in Geneva in December 2003. The ICT Task Force had played an important role in bringing the development agenda to the forefront in Geneva and had also tapped its extensive networks to involve other stakeholders from the private sector and civil society in the preparatory process. In the lead-up to the summit, it had sponsored several regional meetings and organized a series of global forums and side events. At the summit itself, it had hosted a pavilion at the ICT for Development Platform, and many of its working groups had organized roundtables and exhibitions and produced publications. The Task Force would play a key role in the follow-up to Geneva, including in the deliberations on Internet governance, through a series of meetings convened by itself and its regional nodes. Building on its previous experience, it was also taking an active role in the preparations for the second phase, to be held in Tunis in November 2005, in particular with respect to Internet governance and financing mechanisms for ICT.

54. The Task Force had launched several multi-stakeholder initiatives in 2003: the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative; the Policy Awareness and Training in Information Technology series for ambassadors and diplomats; the global e-learning programme for senior policy makers in capitals; national e-strategy capacity-building workshops in Mozambique, Malaysia and Azerbaijan; and others. It had continued to promote the exchange of experience in ICT for development and had produced and distributed publications on important technological advances and their implications for developing countries.

55. The report also outlined the Task Force's priorities and objectives for 2004, including: monitoring progress on the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society; promoting a dialogue on Internet governance and other policy issues; and supporting an enabling environment for ICT-for-development partnerships.

56. The Task Force had clearly demonstrated the need for Governments, civil society and the private sector to work together to achieve a truly global, inclusive and development-oriented information society, as set out at the World Summit. It had also

come to be recognized as a key instrument for promoting the ICT-for-development agenda at the global, regional and national levels and had thus contributed to the United Nations leadership role in that strategic area. The Task Force would continue to advance the development goals of the United Nations in the period leading up to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly and to the Tunis phase of the World Summit in November 2005.

57. **Mr. Laing** (Coordinator, Information and Communication Technologies Board) said that the Secretariat had been working closely with the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics to ensure easy access to the Internet of all permanent and observer missions. It had also collaborated with the Working Group on the new edition of the booklet "Internet services for delegates," which provided information on information technology services available to the missions. The Working Group had supported the initiative of the delegation of Andorra designed to permit delegates to download onto their personal digital assistants information relating to their work at the United Nations. Wireless services was widely available for personal digital assistants and laptop computers at United Nations Headquarters. The Official Document System (ODS) database was being upgraded and use of the system would be free as of the autumn of 2004. Lastly, the Secretariat and the Working Group continued to address the question of spam and viruses in e-mail; filtering devices had eliminated some 95 per cent of the problems, but the Secretariat and Working Group continued to monitor the situation.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.