

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General  
1 May 2007

Original: English

**Substantive session of 2007**

Geneva, 2-27 July 2007

Item 2 (a) of the provisional agenda\*

**Thematic discussion****Thematic discussion of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council: selection of a theme****Note by the Secretary-General***Summary*

The present note is intended to facilitate consultations among Member States in the selection of a theme for the next thematic discussion of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. It contains proposals by organizations of the United Nations system and by intergovernmental bodies.

The 2005 World Summit called upon the Economic and Social Council to promote global dialogue and partnership on global policies and trends in the economic, social, environmental and humanitarian fields. For this purpose, the Council should serve as a quality platform for high-level engagement among Member States and with the international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society on emerging global trends, policies and action. This will enable the Council to strengthen its ability to respond better and more rapidly to developments in the international economic, environmental and social fields.

In pursuance of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/16, decided that the Economic and Social Council should continue to promote global dialogue, inter alia, through a thematic discussion on a theme from economic, social and related fields to be decided by the Council and informed by a report of the Secretary-General.

---

\* E/2007/100.



The 2005 World Summit also took major decisions in addressing the linkages of development, security and human rights. To build on the Summit Outcome, the Council could select an emerging theme that addresses the challenges of development in conflict situations. Therefore, the following theme is recommended for the Council's deliberations and policy discussions during the next thematic discussion of the high-level segment: "The impact of conflict on the implementation of the global public health agenda".

## **I. Selection of a theme for the next thematic discussion**

1. The 2005 World Summit called upon the Economic and Social Council to promote global dialogue and partnership on global policies and trends in the economic, social, environmental and humanitarian fields. For this purpose, the Council should serve as a quality platform for high-level engagement among Member States and with the international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society on emerging global trends, policies and action and develop its ability to respond better and more rapidly to developments in the international economic, environmental and social fields.

2. In pursuance of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/16, decided that the Economic and Social Council should continue to promote global dialogue, inter alia, through a thematic discussion on a theme from economic, social and related fields to be decided by the Council and informed by a report of the Secretary-General.

3. The United Nations Secretariat consulted the organizations of the United Nations system and received proposals for a theme for the next thematic discussion, all of which are contained in annex I to the present note.

### **A. Elements to be considered in selecting the theme**

4. In selecting the theme for its next thematic discussion during the high-level segment, the Economic and Social Council may wish to take into account the following considerations:

(a) The thematic discussion should be on a major economic and/or social policy theme of topical interest;

(b) The theme should allow for an integrated and interdisciplinary approach;

(c) The theme should enable the Council to receive the maximum benefit from ministerial participation and from the presence of heads of agencies, funds, programmes and other bodies of the United Nations system, including the international trade and financial institutions;

(d) The deliberations of the high-level segment should provide political impetus for building areas of convergence and facilitate the consideration of the issues in question, including the emergence of new recommendations on the issues in the relevant forums (General Assembly resolution 45/264, annex, para. 5 (d) (i));

(e) The Agenda for Development (General Assembly resolution 51/240, annex) specified that the Council, at its high-level segment, should consider major issues for international cooperation in the economic, social and related fields. The high-level segment should be used for improving the synergy between the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system. In so doing, the Council should also contribute towards enhancing the interaction between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (para. 252 (a));

(f) In the event that a matter of high urgency and priority subsequently emerges that would qualify as a theme for the high-level segment, the Council may, as appropriate, consider that theme as an additional topic for discussion at its high-level segment (General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I, para. 53).

5. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 2001/27, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, when it considered the themes for its high-level and coordination segments, information about the multi-year work programmes of the functional commissions. The requested information is contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the role of the Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the light of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265, which will be before the Council.
6. The themes examined by the Council at its high-level segments since 1995 are set out in the box below.

**Themes examined by the Economic and Social Council at its high-level segments since 1995**

- 2007 Strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macroeconomic policies.
- 2006 Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development.
- 2005 Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities.
- 2004 Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.
- 2003 Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development.
- 2002 Contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development.
- 2001 Role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development.
- 2000 Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy.
- 1999 Role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women.

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1998 | Market access: developments since the Uruguay Round: implications, opportunities and challenges, in particular for the developing countries and the least developed among them, in the context of globalization and liberalization. |
| 1997 | Fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows, investment and trade.  |
| 1996 | International cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances and related activities.   |
| 1995 | Development of Africa, including the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.  |

## B. Proposal by the Secretary-General

7. The present year marks an important milestone in the life of the Economic and Social Council as the high-level segment will launch two distinctive new functions, mandated by the 2005 World Summit and put into effect by the recent General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Council: the annual ministerial review of progress made in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and the biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

8. These two functions will be launched during the high-level segment in July 2007 in Geneva. They provide a real opportunity to enable the Council to take significant steps forward on implementing its own reform to bring about greater policy coherence and to achieve the realization of the United Nations development agenda.

9. There is need to ensure that the theme for the next thematic discussion during the high-level segment of the Council would also build on the 2005 World Summit Outcome. As the Summit took important decisions with regard to the linkages of development, security and human rights, the Council could reinforce the efforts to implement those decisions by selecting a theme that addresses the impact of conflict on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the broader internationally agreed development goals.

10. Already, the Economic and Social Council has contributed to linking the issues of security, development and human rights. The agreement to extend the mandates of the ad hoc advisory groups on Guinea-Bissau and Haiti is a clear recognition of the useful contribution the Council can make, notably in terms of long-term strategies to address the root causes of conflicts and by promoting an integrated approach in this area.

11. The annual ministerial review will further strengthen the Council's capacity to contribute in the area of security and development, as it will give the Council the opportunity to continually assess how conflict is affecting the implementation of the development agenda and to review and share lessons learned on how Millennium

Development Goal-based strategies can help forestall violent conflict. The high-level biennial development cooperation forum can also provide a unique opportunity for the Council to examine how development cooperation can best support countries in conflict or emerging from it.

12. The General Assembly in its resolution 57/337, supported the more active involvement of the Economic and Social Council with regard to the prevention of armed conflict, taking into account the need to promote socio-economic measures, including economic growth, in support of poverty eradication and development, as a core element of Council strategy in that regard.

13. Against this backdrop, the issue of conflict and health needs to be given serious consideration. Violent conflict is a major public health problem worldwide. Each year, millions of people die as the result of injuries due to violence. Many more survive their injuries, but live with a permanent disability. Violence is among the leading causes of death among people aged 15-44 years worldwide, accounting for 14 per cent of deaths among males and 7 per cent of deaths among females.

14. In addition to death and disability, violent conflicts produce economic and social upheavals: populations may be displaced, infrastructure destroyed and livelihoods lost. This has the potential to translate into severely compromised population health from overcrowding, malnourishment, exposure, contamination, trauma, injury, violence and epidemic diseases that may thrive and rapidly spread in these conditions. Yet, the understanding of the impact of conflict on public health in terms of both policy and practice is just beginning.

15. In the light of the above considerations, the following theme is recommended for the Council's next thematic discussion during the high-level segment: "The impact of conflict on the implementation of the global public health agenda".

16. Such a focus would enable the Economic and Social Council to make a distinct contribution to help integrate conflict perspective more firmly in global public health policies and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as in the follow-up processes to United Nations summits and conferences, particularly the 2005 World Summit. The outcome of the Council's deliberations on this subject could also constitute a substantive contribution to the work of the Organization on peacebuilding and the transition from relief to development.

## Annex I

### Proposals by the organizations of the United Nations system

#### 1. World Food Programme:

(a) “Responding to climate change and renewable energies: the contribution of the United Nations system”;

(b) “Rural-urban transitions and climate change: global implications for food and water security in the face of rapid changes in the structure of demand for food and natural resources”;

(c) “New challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals (especially poverty reduction) in a changing and adverse global climate environment”;

(d) “Economic and social development: getting the balance right”;

(e) “Gender mainstreaming: what has worked, what remains to be done”;

(f) “Enabling agriculture to provide food, livelihoods, economic growth and trade for poverty reduction”.

#### 2. International Labour Organization:

(a) “Employment and social policies for sustainable development: responding to climate change”;

(b) “Halving poverty by 2015: employment policies for sustainable development”.

#### 3. International Maritime Organization:

“United Nations response to emerging environmental challenges: effective implementation of the relevant Millennium Development Goals”.

#### 4. United Nations Environment Programme:

“Mainstreaming adaptation into sustainable development, including assessing climate change impacts on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and its implications”.

## **Annex II**

### **Proposals by intergovernmental bodies**

1. In its resolution 2003/60 on public administration and development, the Economic and Social Council reiterated that strengthening public administration and the State were at the forefront of the development agenda to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and that revitalizing public administration was considered to be one of the essential components of economic and social development, and in that context decided to explore the possibility of considering that theme at a future high-level segment.

2. At the third session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 March to 2 April 2004 (see E/2004/44-E/C.16/2004/9), the Committee recommended that the Economic and Social Council reaffirm the role of the public service in the fulfilment of the specific national goals for socio-economic development, as they are key indicators of the Member States' attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. To this end, the Committee reiterated its earlier recommendation to the Council that it devote one of its next high-level segments to the changing role of a public administration geared to development, both economic and human, in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, with public service delivery as the pivotal element. The Committee of Experts proposed that the segment could be entitled "A service-oriented public administration for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals".

---