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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 20 July 2007, at 10 a.m.

President : M. MÉMORÈS (Haiti) (Vice-President)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Debate on miscellaneous matters (*continued*)

Coordination, programme and other questions
(**Item 7 of the agenda**):

- (a) **Reports of the coordination bodies** (E/2007/69 and A/62/16, Add.16)
- (b) **Draft programme budget for 2008-2009**
(A/62/6, Chapters 9, 10, 12 to 21 and 23 to 26)

Mr. Amin (United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB)) presented the annual overview report of the CEB for 2006/2007 (E/2007/69). Convinced of an increasing sense of common purpose, the CEB had proceeded to adopt a more ambitious approach in the period under review, aimed at formulating and implementing policies that would enable it to contribute more effectively to efforts to overcome the challenges facing the international community. The CEB had examined key issues, including the new mandates assigned to the Economic and Social Council by the 2005 World Summit which could make the Council's work more relevant and effective and which afforded fresh opportunities for real consensus-building between the Council and the United Nations system. The Council's discussion of coordination questions was particularly conducive to that consensus-building process, as was the CEB's annual overview report.

Given that the United Nations' work within countries was a principal determinant of its image among donors and beneficiaries, the CEB had decided to focus on functioning as a coherent system anxious to exert a concerted influence on developing country priorities. It insisted on the need for pilot projects to yield concrete results, whereby the most difficult task was to establish strategic priorities compatible with country priorities. Pointing to the key role played by resident coordinators, the CEB underscored the need for them to receive clear and precise instructions, to be given an appropriate framework for their work, and to know exactly to whom they should account for their activities. It had supported the establishment of a pilot project evaluation process and invited the United Nations Evaluation Group to establish, as a matter of urgency, the technical principles and mechanisms required for that process.

At the same time, the CEB had examined the question of employment and decent work. The High-level Committee on Programmes had developed a mechanism aimed at incorporating employment and decent work goals in the activities of United Nations agencies, while at the same time ensuring that policies were consistent with shared objectives. The CEB had approved that mechanism in its entirety and agreed to evaluate progress made with its implementation.

The CEB had also agreed on the need to pursue the goals of the aid-for-trade project and, in particular, to bolster the resources of developing countries used to strengthen trade capacities. The Board's role, in that regard, would consist of helping countries set priorities, integrate trade and national policies in their programmes, and find regional solutions. The CEB had decided to consider the establishment of a cluster responsible for trade and productive capacities.

The CEB had decided to add two new issues to its agenda: support for Africa's development and climate change. As for management issues, it had underscored the need to expedite work on the harmonization of the United Nations system's business practices. For that, the High-level Committee on Management should prepare a plan of action geared to the priorities of the programme and focusing on six categories. The CEB had also reviewed the question of a joint approach to the dissemination of the information contained in the internal auditors' reports, the question of financing for the United Nations agencies' security management system, and the management network question.

The High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management had reviewed, in the framework of their joint meetings, several intersectoral issues, especially gender equality and gender mainstreaming, results-based management, strengthening of the United Nations System Staff College, and the introduction of a system-wide evaluation mechanism. With a view to making the CEB more effective, the Secretary-General had asked the Directors-General of the ILO and the WTO to conduct a review of its operating procedures. It had been agreed that its key functions were harmonization of business practices, systems and procedures, general policy issues, and operations within countries. It was decided that an integrated structure of the High-level Committee would support the role of the CEB as the principal architect of inter-agency coordination and, at

the same time, integrate vertical and horizontal coordination at the global, regional and national levels.

The next stage of the review process would focus, above all, on an inventory of all inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, more in-depth analysis of policy consistency, and improvement of the Secretariat's technical services.

As regards the report of the Committee on Programmes and Coordination (A/62/16), the President referred Council members to the text of the presentation distributed to them.

Mr. Molina (Observer for Venezuela) congratulated the Committee on Programmes and Coordination (CPC) on its work. Venezuela supported the recommendations contained in Chapter IV of the report (A/62/16), particularly with regard to support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It insisted, however, on drawing attention to the United Nations Secretary-General's idea of pooling the functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, landlocked developing countries, small island States and UNCTAD's New York liaison office, and to abolish the position of Special Adviser on Africa. Considering that a measure of that nature would run counter not only to established procedures but also to the will of a large majority of Member States, the delegation of Venezuela insisted on the CPC's recommendation to the effect that it was a matter of urgency to fill the position of Special Adviser on Africa (paragraph 128). The delegation supported the communication recently conveyed to the Secretary-General by the Group of 77 and China, expressing their concerns with respect to the proposed restructuring. Like the CPC, the delegation of Venezuela welcomed the initiative of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board to undergo a review of its own modus operandi with a view to becoming more effective. Finally, it subscribed to the opinion voiced by the Committee in paragraph 140 of its report that the question of rationalizing its working procedures should not remain on the agenda indefinitely.

The President proposed that members of the Council take note of the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2006/2007 and of the Committee on Programmes and Coordination on work for its 47th session (A/42/16).

It was so decided.

The President said that the Council had thereby concluded its review of items 7 (a) and 7 (b) of the agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 10.47 a.m.

(d) Long-term programme of support for Haiti
(E/2007/78)

(g) Ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict (E/2007/57)

Mr. Adsett (Canada) presented the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and said that its recommendations had been drafted in consultation with the government that emerged from the 2006 parliamentary elections. The report showed that it was of the utmost importance to keep Haiti at the centre of international community concerns, particularly by ensuring a strong United Nations presence on its territory in the form of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). At the same time, the Haitian Government's stabilization, democratization, and development efforts should continue, above all with respect to strengthening the legislature and institutional reforms and to poverty reduction.

The Advisory Group recommended that the Government draw up, after a broad participatory process, a Haitian Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper with well defined priorities for the immediate future and for the short, medium and long term. Based on that, it would be easier to put in place a permanent mechanism of consultation with the non-governmental organizations active in Haiti, in the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The other recommendations of the Advisory Group had to do with reform of the judiciary and other institutions required for the rule of law needed to boost confidence for economic growth, social integration, and equity; gender mainstreaming in all economic and social development policies; and the preparation of business strategies in the areas of tourism, agriculture, and assembly industries.

Mr. Boutroue (Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Resident Coordinator in Haiti) noted with satisfaction that government authority had been restored following three years of arbitrary administration and terror and

the country now had a democratically elected government, even if political consensus remained fragile. Apart from continuing to support the democratic process, the United Nations was working to bolster national and local administration, an undertaking that was constantly hampered by lack of resources, especially for training and infrastructure.

As for security, the authorities had managed to dismantle almost all the organized gangs that had controlled vast areas of Port-au-Prince. However, given the socio-economic context, the situation was still potentially explosive. In particular, consolidation required control of land and maritime borders by a border police force that MINUSTAH and the Haitian police were in the process of building. In the meantime, it was imperative to maintain a large and well equipped international force.

Public services (health, education and basic infrastructure) and law enforcement agencies were still insufficiently developed, notably for lack of tax revenue. The most intractable problems were in the prisons, for which foreign financial assistance would be needed for several more years. As regards corruption, the President had promised to wage a campaign against it, which the United Nations would support.

Haiti had progressed economically thanks to the poverty reduction programme approved by the International Monetary Fund in November 2006 and to the preferential tariffs granted by the United States for the textile sector. Nevertheless, social development indicators — the mortality rate among children under five years of age, school enrolment, the incidence of extreme poverty — remained alarming and it would be illusory to think that Haiti could achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In that area, United Nations action would not suffice, should bilateral donors and creditors and the private sector fail to mobilize resources, especially in order to revive tourism, agriculture, and assembly industries. In addition, Haiti should benefit from debt forgiveness.

Mr. Chihuailaf (Observer for Chile) underscored the improvements achieved in the institutional, economic and social spheres thanks to sound management of the country, the holding of presidential elections, and the extensive reforms carried out with the help of the international community. However, there remained numerous structural constraints on the

country's development and the MDGs would not be reached by 2015. Moreover, the police force and the judiciary were still insufficiently developed and civil registration was no longer enforced.

Of the recommendations put forward by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, Chile stressed in particular the one regarding gender mainstreaming in all the country's economic and social development policies and the recommendation that advice be sought from the International Labour Organization on ways of integrating decent work standards in employment generation initiatives.

The Advisory Group was the body in the best position to help donor countries and the countries providing peacekeepers to prepare a joint strategy aimed at consolidating gains made so far. In that capacity, it was called upon to play a major part in the economic development project that had to accompany the political stabilization process, with the political and financial support of the international community.

Chile was actively participating in MINUSTAH and in the Advisory Group. The fact that in 2007, the Chilean parliament renewed for a further year the detachment of almost 600 soldiers to MINUSTAH illustrates the importance Chile attaches to the political and economic reconstruction of Haiti.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) subscribed fully to the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and, in particular, to its appeal to international actors to increase their support to the country. Haiti had important assets that would be worth developing further, such as health centres, schools and hotel infrastructure, in order to tie it in with the rest of the subregion. It would also be necessary to solve the problem of massive underemployment among young people.

Mr. Ehouzou considered that it was crucial to consolidate peace and, therefore, to renew MINUSTAH's mandate. At the same time, one should not underestimate the question of coordination and of the weakness of institutions. Given the limited absorption capacity of the State, recovery priorities had to be established. From that point of view, given the urgency and magnitude of the tasks to be accomplished, Haiti should benefit from the technical assistance of both southern and northern countries via ODA and international organizations.

Mr. Hart (Barbados) indicated that Barbados and Guyana had joined the authors of the draft resolution entitled “Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti” (E/2007/L.18). Barbados, which currently chairs the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), was responsible, in that capacity, for overseeing the strengthening of regional integration. The sustainable development of Haiti and the reconstruction of its democratic institutions, as well as its social and physical infrastructure, were a matter of strategic importance for CARICOM. That is why it continued to support the country’s recovery and development efforts through a technical assistance programme. The upcoming re-opening of the CARICOM office in Port-au-Prince was to be seen in that context. To conclude, Mr. Hart urged donors to maintain their political and financial support to Haiti in order to consolidate the progress made and to help the country take the place it deserves in the alliance of nations.

Mr. Lopes Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) recalled that his country had historic ties with Haiti. He welcomed the remarkable progress made in the country since 2006 and considered that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti had served, in exemplary fashion, the cause of a people that needs support. Contrary to what some people claimed, Haiti’s situation today was not predestined. The country undoubtedly had to contend with structural problems constraining its development, but substantial assistance from the international community should enable it to restore economic and political stability.

Mr. Lopes Cabral insisted that there could be no political stability without harmonious development. The youth unemployment and urban overcrowding problems therefore had to be solved as a matter of urgency. Consequently, it was advisable to mobilize the international community and encourage Haiti’s partners to make an additional effort, in order to help the Haitian people overcome the numerous challenges it faces.

Mr. Feyder (Luxembourg) welcomed the efforts by the international community to restore security and stability in Haiti, safeguard the workings of democracy and promote development. However, he stressed that, according to a recent European Union report, economic, social and cultural rights were still abstract concepts for the majority of the Haitian population. Moreover, according to a magazine article published in

November 2006, the trade liberalization policy implemented in Haiti had had a disastrous impact on rural areas and, in particular, on Haitian agriculture. Whereas Haitian agriculture had once been self-sufficient, today the country had to use 80 per cent of its export revenue to finance food imports, thereby inducing a deficit in the trade balance.

Since he considered this situation highly alarming, Mr. Feyder proposed that the Economic and Social Council ask the Advisory Group to look into the consequences of the trade liberalization policy adopted by Haiti. The non-governmental organizations that had taken part in the mission that the Advisory Group had conducted in the country in April 2007 could be associated with that research. Finally, it would be appropriate for the Economic and Social Council to bring up this question during the discussions with the Bretton Woods institutions scheduled for 2008.

Mr. Miller (United States) asked the representative of Luxembourg whether the point of view expressed in the article he had mentioned represented the views of the Government of Luxembourg.

Mr. Feyder (Luxembourg) said that, in the debate held on 1 December 2006 at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), his Government had adopted a very clear stance on this subject, and specifically with respect to similar problems encountered by Senegal. Furthermore, Luxembourg’s Minister of Cooperation and Humanitarian Action had pronounced unequivocally on this problem in the Luxembourg Parliament, on 24 April 2007.

Mr. Pierre (Haiti) paid tribute to the quality of the Advisory Group’s report on his country and supported its recommendations. He underscored the importance of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) mentioned in the Group’s report. The completion of that report was essential for preparing the diagnostic assessment of the integration of Haitian trade in trade circuits and Haiti’s adherence to the enhanced integrated trade framework prepared by the World Bank, the IMF, WTO, UNCTAD and UNDP. The World Bank was currently conducting a fact-finding mission to discuss the mechanisms of Haiti’s integration in international trade.

Mr. Pierre appealed to donors and creditors to contribute to the peacebuilding efforts. It would also be necessary to step up technical assistance in order to

consolidate Haitian democracy and provide jobs for youth in order to prevent them lapsing into drugs and violence.

The President, speaking as the representative of Haiti, said that his country had made considerable progress, which had enhanced macroeconomic stability and improved security, even though much remained to be done. The establishment, in 2006, of a democratically elected government had allowed in-depth reforms to get under way. Haiti refused to regard its under-development as predestined and was, on the contrary, encouraged by the conviction that the efforts of Haitians and those of the international community would enable the country to overcome the difficulties it faces. The whole country was on the right path and, thanks to international cooperation, it would one day be able to take its place in the international arena.

Draft resolution on the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (E/2007/L.18)

Mr. Carvel (Canada), presenting the draft resolution on the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, indicated that according to the draft, the Group's mandate would be extended until the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July 2008. The Group would thus be in a position to monitor the situation closely and to advise on Haiti's long-term development strategy, aimed at promoting social and economic growth and stability, while paying particular attention to the need to ensure coherent and sustainable international support for the country.

If its mandate was extended, the Advisory Group intended to continue to cooperate with the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in Chile, the head of MINUSTAH, the United Nations Development Group, the competent United Nations funds, programmes and specialized institutions, the Bretton Woods institutions, regional organizations and institutions, including the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community, the Inter-American Development Bank, and other major stakeholders.

The President indicated that the Economic and Social Council would pronounce on this draft resolution at a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Moulton (South Africa), presenting the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on

Guinea-Bissau (E/2007/57), said that the ongoing deterioration of the socio-economic and financial situation in Guinea-Bissau was alarming. That country had experienced a difficult transition since the end of the conflict and needed the steadfast support of the international community and of regional organizations. In March 2007, a motion of no-confidence led to the downfall of the government and the formation of a coalition government. Moreover, Guinea-Bissau had recently become a transit zone for drug trafficking. It was to be hoped that the upcoming parliamentary elections would provide an opportunity for the country to shore up its political and institutional stability.

Given the situation, it was unlikely that Guinea-Bissau would post sufficient economic growth to enable it to reach the MDGs by 2015. The International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, launched on 20 September 2006, was supposed to encourage the international community to lend political, socio-economic and diplomatic support and to contribute to security sector reform. The Contact Group held its second meeting in Lisbon on 26 March 2007, after having visited the country.

Since the presentation of the Advisory Group's last report in 2006, a fishing rights agreement between Guinea-Bissau and the European Union had been signed: a welcome development because the Advisory Group had feared that inability to reach an agreement on the subject was depriving the Government of a major source of revenue and preventing it from covering its fiscal deficit for 2007. The Advisory Group also welcomed the signing of an agreement between the European Commission and the Government of Guinea-Bissau, which provides for the disbursement of 6.2 million euros to finance the latter's budget, and the announcement of contributions by the African Development Bank and by France in the amount of US\$ 1.7 million and 300,000 euros, respectively. It was essential that the international community honour the commitments it made at the round-table conference of donors in November 2006, since Guinea-Bissau direly needed those contributions to cover its 2007 fiscal deficit.

The Advisory Group called on Guinea-Bissau not to spare any effort to remedy the structural causes that gave rise to the conflict, because without that it would be impossible for the country to achieve lasting peace and stability. It therefore encouraged Guinea-Bissau to persist with its economic reforms and invited donors

and other partners to support the country's recovery and reconstruction programmes. It would be useful if the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council could find an opportunity to share the benefits of their experiences regarding the path to follow in Guinea-Bissau, in order for the country to appear on the agenda of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, a proposal that the Government had ratified. Meanwhile, the Advisory Group would continue to fulfil the mandate conferred on it by the Economic and Social Council and wished to convey its gratitude to all the individuals and entities that, within their respective spheres of competence, had contributed valuable assistance, without which it would have been difficult to perform its task effectively.

Mr. Lopes Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) thanked Mr. Moulton for presenting the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, which had revealed the precariousness of the situation in that country and above all the ongoing difficulties that cried out for more attention from the international community.

Mr. Lopes Cabral agreed that it was first and foremost up to the citizens of Guinea-Bissau themselves to see to the development of their country and that if the new government wished to put the country back on the right path, it would have to learn to manage the scant resources at its disposal correctly and as transparently as possible, make sure that democracy and economic stability materialize and ensure that the institutions established guarantee the defence and promotion of human rights.

Worried by the fact that Guinea-Bissau had recently become a transit zone for drug trafficking, Mr. Lopes Cabral called on the international community to help his country fight that scourge. He feared not only that young people at loose ends because of the high rate of unemployment would fall victim to that phenomenon but also that drug money could tamper with parliamentary elections and help put in office people capable of impairing the country's credibility.

Mr. Lopes Cabral then gave an assurance that everything would be done to cover the fiscal deficit and to ensure that those governing the country place the national interest above their own personal interests.

Mr. Exantus (Haiti) then thanked Mr. Moulton for his presentation and expressed the solidarity of the Haitian Government with Guinea-Bissau, which

laboured under the same problems as his country, namely underdevelopment, institutional shortcomings and poverty. He, too, called on the international community to support Guinea-Bissau's efforts to establish the rule of law, peace and social harmony.

Mr. Miller (United States) said that Haiti and Guinea-Bissau were experiencing very difficult circumstances, which required the assistance of the international community. He regretted that the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups established over the years by the Economic and Social Council and those of the Peacebuilding Commission sometimes overlapped and considered that thought should be given to ways of avoiding such duplication.

Mr. Miller noted that the Peacebuilding Commission had helped reverse the situation in each of the two countries, although much remained to be done. He expressed his Government's solidarity towards the people of Guinea-Bissau and Haiti and saw the remarkable skills of the leaders of those two countries as reasons to have confidence in the future.

Ms. Sapinho Pires (Cape Verde islands) thanked Mr. Moulton for presenting the report of the Advisory Group and endorsed the recommendations it contains. She considered it a matter of urgency that the international community help Guinea-Bissau combat drug trafficking, which threatened to undermine the country's efforts to achieve development, peace and security. She conveyed her Government's support for Guinea-Bissau, a fellow nation and friend of the Cape Verde islands.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.