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Economic and Social Council

Substantive session of 2007

Provisional summary record of the 47th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 27 July 2007, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Mèrorès (Haiti)
later: Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania) (Vice-President)

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Closure of the session

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

General segment *(continued)*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations *(continued)*

Mr. Smith (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the United Kingdom's sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands was unchallengeable and the principle of the self-determination of peoples meant that they could not be the subject of any negotiation without the consent of their inhabitants.

Mr. Martinez Gondra (Observer for Argentina), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, in asserting its sovereignty over the disputed islands as absolute and not negotiable, the United Kingdom was disregarding the General Assembly recommendations, which had called many times on the parties to find a peaceful solution to the dispute through negotiation. Moreover, the principle of the self-determination of peoples did not apply in the case in question, as British forces had invaded the islands in 1833 and driven out the population to install settlers.

Coordination segment

The role of the United Nations system in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all *(continued)*

Draft resolution E/2007/L.32

The President informed the Council that draft resolution E/2007/L.32, entitled "Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16" had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.32 was adopted.

Ms. Gomes (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Council should play a stronger role in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 61/16, the holding of the Annual Ministerial Review and the establishment of the Development Cooperation Forum were practical measures taken in follow-up to paragraphs 155 and 156 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which had thus been partially implemented. The European Union was awaiting with interest the reform of the Council that was to be undertaken in application of decision 2006/206. It considered the multi-year work programme an appropriate instrument that would allow the Council's subsidiary bodies, the international organizations and civil society to make a useful contribution to the Annual Ministerial Review.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.33

The President informed the Council that draft resolution E/2007/L.33, entitled "Theme of the 2008 coordination segment", had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.33 was adopted.

The President said that the Council had thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 4 and declared the 2007 coordination segment closed.

General segment (*continued*)

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (*continued*)

Draft resolution E/2007/L.31

The President informed the Council that draft resolution E/2007/L.31, entitled “Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development”, had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.31 was adopted.

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010 (*continued*)

Draft resolution E/2007/L.36

The President informed the Council that draft resolution E/2007/L.36, entitled “Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010”, had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.36 was adopted.

The President recalled that the Council had noted the Secretary-General’s report on the role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (A/62/89-E/2007/76). The Council might like to express its appreciation of the work of the Global Alliance for Information and Communications Technologies and Development reported in the annex to the document.

It was so decided.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(h) Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (*continued*)

Draft resolution E/2007/L.23

Mr. Phuangketkeow (Thailand) said that Albania, Belarus, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, Greece, Guyana, Luxembourg, Monaco, Paraguay, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine had joined the sponsors of draft resolution E/2007/L.23, entitled “Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)”.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.23 was adopted.

Mr. Miller (United States of America) pointed out that his country was opposed to any interpretation of the term “sexual and reproductive health” that could imply approval of abortion. Furthermore, the spread of HIV/AIDS should be fought through a global strategy based on the three principles of: abstinence for young or unmarried persons and delay in first sexual relations, mutual faithfulness and a reduction in the number of partners for sexually active adults, and condom use for those with high-risk sexual behaviour. Any

intervention should take account of needs, epidemiological characteristics and locally observed social and cultural norms, and be coordinated with the HIV/AIDS control strategies of the government concerned.

Mr. Ameerajwas (Sri Lanka) said that his country had succeeded in containing the pandemic at national level and helping those affected. Several factors had contributed to that success: low frequency of casual sexual relations, good access to health care, the success of sexually transmitted disease control programmes, the small number of injecting drug users and the favourable social position of women. In addition to their action in the medical field, the Sri Lankan authorities also combatted the social, political, legal and economic factors that favoured the virus. Sri Lanka was to host the Eighth International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific in August 2007.

(e) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system *(continued)*

Social and human rights questions *(continued)*

(a) Advancement of women *(continued)*

Draft resolution E/2007/L.28

The President informed the Council that Draft resolution E/2007/L.28, entitled “Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system”, had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.28 was adopted.

Mr. Martabit (Observer for Chile) said that mainstreaming a gender perspective into the policies and programmes of the United Nations system was a useful way of making the system fairer. Chile particularly welcomed the appointment by the United Nations Children’s Fund of a special adviser on gender and diversity, an example that could serve as inspiration for the other United Nations agencies.

Ms. Carvalho (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the advancement of women and gender equality were essential to the mission of the United Nations system, and could help alleviate poverty and stimulate growth.

The European Union was committed to strengthening gender parity within the system and wished to draw attention to the reason behind the idea of establishing an entity specifically responsible for the issue, which was that the existing mechanism was incoherent, underfunded and fragmented. The strengthening that was sought could not be achieved simply by bringing together existing mechanisms under a new umbrella; greater coherence had to be ensured by associating normative and analytical work with technical, leadership and programming functions; and it must permeate the whole system, while based on one central mechanism with the requisite authority. Entrusting that task to someone with the rank of Deputy Secretary-General was thus a reasonable solution, and the recommendations of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence formed a good basis for the work ahead.

Regional cooperation *(continued)*

Ms. Pliner (secretariat) drew the Council’s attention to the fact that, in taking note of the addendum to the Secretary-General’s report on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2007/15/Add.1), the Council would also be taking note of several resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its sixty-third session. They were also mentioned in the Commission’s

annual report (E/2007/39-E/ESCAP/63/35) and were accompanied by a statement of the programme budget implications (annex I of the same document), which was still valid.

The President invited the Council to take note of the following documents: “Regional Cooperation in the Economic, Social and Related Fields” (E/2007/15 and Adds.1 and 2), “Economic developments in the Economic Commission for Europe region” (E/2007/16), “Overview of the economic and social conditions in Africa 2007” (E/2007/17), “Summary of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2007” (E/2007/18), “Latin America and the Caribbean: economic situation and outlook, 2006–2007” (E/2007/19) and “Summary of the survey of economic and social developments in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region, 2006–2007” (E/2007/20).

It was so decided.

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(a) Sustainable development (*continued*)

Draft resolution E/2007/L.34

The President informed the Council that draft resolution E/2007/L.34, entitled “Report of the Committee for Development Policy on its ninth session” had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.34 was adopted.

Mr. Esteves (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, took note of the facts and opinions formulated by the Committee for Development Policy in the report on its ninth session, particularly its recommendations on climate change, poverty elimination and the least developed countries, issues that the European Union considered of greatest importance in responding to current development challenges.

Draft resolutions E/2007/L.35 and E/2007/L.9

The President informed the Council that draft resolution E/2007/L.35, entitled “Report of the Committee for Development Policy on its eighth session”, had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.35 was adopted.

Mr. Esteves (Portugal), on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the remarkable progress in development achieved by Samoa in recent years and congratulated the country on the initiatives it had taken at national and international levels towards graduation from the least developed countries (LDCs) category. The European Union was fully in favour of the three-year transition period granted; Samoa would certainly work with its development partners to take advantage of that period, ensuring that the reclassification did not threaten its achievements. The European Union was one of the most active supporters of the LDC category, and considered it vital that the category remain credible, consisting of only the least developed developing countries. In that connection, it reaffirmed the importance of the independence of the expert members of the Committee for Development Policy, and again underlined the pertinence of the Committee’s conclusions, including those on inclusion on and graduation from the list, in the context of its triennial review of LDCs. Graduation from the LDC category should be seen as a positive stage in a country’s economic development, but such countries needed a smooth transition to help them adapt and avoid disruption in their development programmes and projects. The European Union would continue to promote measures to help countries graduate from the LDC category as part of a smooth transition strategy.

Mr. Jazairy (Algeria) said that he welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, which marked the passage of another country to middle income country status. In Africa in particular, where the growth rate had been remarkable in 2006, such countries should not be punished, but rather rewarded and encouraged, hence the need for a smooth transition strategy that did not reduce support but brought about a qualitative transformation in the aid received.

Mr. Bagchi (India) said that vulnerability, a criterion emphasized in the decision on Samoa, was a fundamental issue that had been highlighted by the case in question.

Mr. Lopes Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) said he was pleased with Samoa's success, as its graduation from the LDC group showed once again that poverty was not inevitable and that, through the efforts of countries themselves and international aid, but also through good management of the funds and resources available and viable democratic institutions, the fight against poverty could produce compelling results. Like other countries that had graduated from the category, Samoa needed the active support of the international community, not only to remain out of the LDC category, but also to continue to make progress.

The President said that he had stated several times at informal meetings on the subject in New York that Samoa's graduation from the LDC category did not in any way mean the end or suspension of aid from the international community. The Council would ensure that the country continued to receive such aid, particularly during the transition period.

The President asked whether, given the adoption of the draft resolution E/2007/L.35, the sponsor of draft resolution E/2007/L.9 wished to withdraw that text.

Mr. Miller (United States) said he did.

It was so decided.

Draft oral decision on Papua New Guinea

The President drew the Council's attention to the matter of the inclusion of Papua New Guinea on the list of least developed countries. He proposed the following draft oral decision that had resulted from informal consultations held the previous day:

The Economic and Social Council

Recalling the recommendation contained in the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its eighth session that Papua New Guinea be included in the list of least developed countries, and noting that the Government of Papua New Guinea has formally declined the invitation to be included in the list of least developed countries,

Decides not to recommend to the General Assembly that Papua New Guinea be included in the list of least developed countries.

Mr. Bagchi (India) said he supported Papua New Guinea's decision. He hoped that the Committee for Development Policy would reconsider its working methods so that a country's decision to refuse or agree to its inclusion on the list of LDCs could be taken before the Committee's recommendation was issued, instead of being subordinate to it.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.37

The President informed the Council that draft resolution E/2007/L.37, entitled “United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development”, had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.37 was adopted.

Mr. Ranarivelo-Razafy (Madagascar) said that, as the first pilot country for the initiative, Madagascar welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution. It was also pleased that two other countries, Angola and Ethiopia, had stated their interest in becoming the third and fourth pilot countries.

Mr. Makieke (Angola) thanked the countries associated with the draft resolution and the Council secretariat for agreeing to consider Angola’s expression of interest in becoming a pilot country for the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development. The period of economic growth that was beginning in Angola after several decades of conflict would have to satisfy a number of requirements if it were to stabilize: diversification of the economy, particularly through development of the agricultural sector and national production, increase in trade, and the consolidation of relations between all the sectors that contribute to improved rural living conditions. Angola believed that the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development could help it achieve its objectives in that direction, which is why it wished to become a pilot country.

(e) Environment *(continued)*

The President proposed that the Council should take note of the Secretary-General’s report on products harmful to health and the environment (A/62/78-E/2007/62), and request the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Member States and relevant intergovernmental bodies, to assess whether the Consolidated List of Products Whose Consumption and/or Sale have been Banned, Withdrawn, Severely Restricted or Not Approved by Governments was still of interest to the Member States, and to report back to the 2008 substantive session.

It was so decided.

(g) Public administration and development *(continued)*

The President suggested deferring consideration of the report by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its sixth session (E/2007/44) to its resumed substantive session.

It was so decided.

(h) International cooperation in tax matters *(continued)*

Draft resolution E/2007/L.30

The President suggested deferring consideration of the draft resolution entitled “Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters” to its resumed substantive session.

It was so decided.

(k) Cartography *(continued)*

The President said he believed that the Council would need more time to draw up a draft proposal on recommendation 7 of the Secretary-General’s report on the work of the Seventeenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific

(E/CONF.97/7), which dealt with the organization of the Eighteenth Conference. He therefore suggested that the Council should decide to defer consideration of the recommendation.

It was so decided.

Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

(a) Advancement of women (*continued*)

Draft resolution E/2007/L.29

The President informed the Council that Draft resolution E/2007/L.29, entitled “Future work to strengthen the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women”, had no programme budget implications.

Ms. Pliner (secretariat) said that the heading of the draft resolution should be corrected to show that Pakistan was the sponsor on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.29, as orally corrected, was adopted.

(i) Genetic privacy and non-discrimination (*continued*)

Oral decision

The President suggested that the Council should take note of document E/2007/65/Add.1 and 2, and request the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other relevant intergovernmental entities, to recommend the most appropriate forum or forums for the consideration of the issue of genetic privacy and non-discrimination, and to report back at the substantive session of 2008.

It was so decided.

Other oral decisions under agenda item 14

The President suggested that the Council should take note of the following reports under various paragraphs of item 14: Note by the Secretary-General on results of the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, under item 14 (a); oral report on the coordination aspects of the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, under item 14 (e); report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (E/2007/82), under item 14 (g); report on the sixth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (E/2007/43), under item 14 (h).

It was so decided.

United Nations research and training institutes (*continued*)

The President suggested that the Council should take note of document E/2007/60, which contained the report of the Director of the United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy.

It was so decided.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

Application of an intergovernmental organization for observer status with the Economic and Social Council to (E/2006/87)

The President drew the Council members' attention to the application for observer status from an intergovernmental organization, the International Emergency Management Organization, contained in document E/2006/87.

Ms. Adsett (Canada) said that information was still being sought to answer a question concerning the application, and suggested deferring the decision on the subject to a later date.

The President took note of the statement by the representative of Canada and suggested deferring consideration of the application.

It was so decided.

The President announced that the Council had thus concluded the general segment.

Closure of the session

Mr. Cekuolis took the chair.

Mr. Seth (Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination), reading a statement by Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that the Council had entered a new era and that the 2007 substantive session, by implementing the vision of the 2005 World Summit, had opened new avenues for the work of the Council. He thanked the President and other members of the Bureau for their leadership and deep commitment to the work of the Council, and the delegations for their dedication and collaboration. The 2007 substantive session had seen many new signs, with the selection of topical issues, the thorough and extensive preparations, the format of discussions, the new level of engagement by all stakeholders, and the stronger partnerships established through the Innovation Fair. The Economic and Social Council should continue to build on such innovations.

The first Annual Ministerial Review, with its special focus on the eradication of poverty and hunger, had exceeded all expectations. The voluntary national presentations by Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia and Ghana had provided vivid details of the challenges and opportunities that countries were confronting in realizing that objective. There were five clear messages. Firstly, national development strategies were working, but not at the pace required; the implementation process thus needed to be accelerated and scaled up. Secondly, the global partnership should be made more effective in all its dimensions. Thirdly, the global economic environment should be made pro-development and pro-poor. Fourthly, monitoring the implementation of commitments and accountability should be strengthened. And finally, emerging threats, like climate change and desertification, that hampered efforts to realize those goals should be addressed urgently.

The Council had that year found creative ways of approaching the most topical issue of climate change, not only through candid discussions during the high-level segment but also through the personal initiative of the President in bringing key policymakers together for a useful discussion that had opened new possibilities for the Council's work in that and other areas. Those efforts should be built on to ensure that the Council would become an effective forum for deliberations on such challenges.

The official launch of the Development Cooperation Forum had marked the first collective step towards making development cooperation more effective, coherent and

coordinated. Four clear messages had come out of the discussions: firstly, a key challenge in cooperating for development was to make the process truly inclusive, based on national ownership and leadership; secondly, there must be predictable and stable funding coupled with effective monitoring of aid quality; thirdly, the growing importance of South-South and triangular cooperation could not be overemphasized, but should not be a substitute for North-South cooperation; fourthly, there was broad agreement on a number of principles on promoting effective and coherent international development cooperation.

The first-ever Innovation Fair had been an opportunity for exhibitors to present practical solutions for the reduction of hunger, malnutrition and poverty in the context of international partnerships.

The other segments of the Council had covered a wide range of issues, from employment generation, humanitarian operations and the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review to countries emerging from conflict. The Council's work in the humanitarian segment had moved from strength to strength. It had emphasized the need for broader partnerships among humanitarian organizations; for incorporation of a gender perspective in humanitarian operations; and the need to use military assets in natural disaster response. Discussion on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review had underlined the importance of national ownership and leadership of operational activities; of further support for the transition from relief to development; and, above all, of increased and more stable and predictable core resources. Moreover, the Council had extended the mandates of the Ad-hoc Advisory Groups on Haiti and Guinea-Bissau, and, thanks in particular to the Civil Society Development Forum, it had seen much broader participation by civil society in the session.

However, a number of challenges still demanded the Council's attention: first, the innovation, energy and dynamism witnessed in the high-level segment needed to permeate other segments; secondly, a decision was needed quickly on the multi-year programme of work in respect of the Annual Ministerial Review; thirdly, the Council needed delegations to volunteer for the national presentations during the Reviews. The offer from the Netherlands to make a presentation the following year was very welcome.

Speaking on his own behalf, noted that the current session had helped to dispel three myths about the Council's work. The first was that the agenda of the sessions did not deal with topical issues of concern to the international community. The second, which had also been dispelled, was that the Council's work duplicated that of the Second Committee. Certainly, the two bodies did consider a number of issues that were the same, but the nature of the discussions and the Council's in-depth consideration of them was fundamentally different. And finally, the third myth was that the Council was inefficient in its work. While some issues had indeed been deferred that year, they were not as important as some that had been deferred in the past.

Mr. Jazaïry (Algeria) proposed shortening the Council's session in Geneva, and concentrating it on a few key items, such as the high-level segment and a number of humanitarian issues, with current affairs and more technical issues to be considered in New York. He recommended that the Organization's Secretariat should consider the proposal.

The President thanked all the participants for their effort and determination, particularly the Vice-Presidents and the secretariat, as well as the many representatives who had facilitated the adoption of several important resolutions.

The session had shown that the Council was capable of adjusting its way of work to be able to respond to the many hopes it inspired and to deal with the most important development issues, including poverty and hunger. The Council had become central to achieving the United Nations' development objectives, and the heads of State had recently expanded its functions to that end.

The Annual Ministerial Review, during which the ministers of six developing countries had presented their development cooperation activities from the national viewpoint, had seen a very useful exchange of information and data. Several countries, including the Netherlands, had offered to make a presentation at the next Annual Review. The Review was also an opportunity to look at one of the fundamental development issues, the eradication of poverty, from different points of view.

The launch of the Development Cooperation Forum had been an opportunity for a very stimulating dialogue on issues related to South-South cooperation and aid coordination.

The Ministerial Declaration, adopted by consensus, had sent out an important message, showing the international community that it had to unite to overcome the obstacles to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The agreement extending the mandates of the Ad-Hoc Advisory Groups on Haiti and Guinea-Bissau showed the usefulness of the Council's contribution in promoting an integrated approach to peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict.

The session had been an opportunity to deal with a broad range of issues, from the promotion of full employment and decent jobs to more predictable funding for development activities, via the use of military assets during disaster relief operations and humanitarian aid funding mechanisms.

It was important to agree on the subjects to be discussed at the forthcoming sessions of the Council so that the Member States and the United Nations agencies could make timely preparations. Effort must also be made to reach a rapid decision on the multi-year programme of work.

Mr. Ayub (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stated that the historic session that was coming to a close had made it possible to lay the foundations for a stronger Council. He welcomed the results of the Annual Ministerial Review, the launching of the Development Cooperation Forum, and the adoption by consensus of the Ministerial Declaration. However, he did agree that the Annual Ministerial Review would also benefit in the future from the participation of the developed countries, rather than remaining limited to presentations by developing countries. Moreover, the Council should ensure that the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum focused more on action and results. To improve the Council's efficiency, its decisions and its work must be based on factual information and recent developments.

Criteria needed to be established for evaluation of the implementation of the Millennium Goals in the context of the global partnership for development, and monitoring mechanisms set up for each area of activity to ensure that the analyses and recommendations were indeed based on fact.

Mr. Esteves (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, stated that the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum had been important steps on the path to strengthening the Council. The European Union welcomed the forthcoming adoption of the multi-year programme of work, which would give the high-level segment of future sessions the necessary predictability and thus allow the Council's subsidiary bodies and other participants to contribute as effectively as possible.

The discussions on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review would form a useful basis for the General Assembly's consideration of that issue, of such importance to the United Nations system.

It should be remembered that, during the humanitarian segment, the Council had adopted a consensus resolution on strengthening the coordination of United Nations emergency humanitarian assistance.

The European Union thanked the Bureau and the secretariat for their contribution to the success of the session.

After an exchange of courtesies, in which **Mr. Lopes Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau), **Mr. Gas** (Observer for Switzerland) and **Ms. Bloem** (Observer for the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations) spoke, **the President** declared the session closed.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.