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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council

Note by the President of the General Assembly

By its resolution 61/16, entitled “Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council”, the General Assembly decided to review the implementation of that resolution at its sixty-fifth session. In my letter dated 23 February 2011, I appointed Octavio Errázuriz, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, to serve as Facilitator and to lead consultations on the review of the implementation of the resolution.

I have the honour to transmit herewith the final report and recommendations on the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic Social Council (see annex).

On the basis of my consultations, it is my intention to propose to the General Assembly that it adopt the report and to encourage stakeholders referred to in the report to follow up on the recommendations contained therein.



Annex

Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council

Introduction

Background

1. The General Assembly adopted its resolution 61/16 as a follow-up to the decisions of Heads of State and Government on the Economic and Social Council adopted at the 2005 World Summit (see Assembly resolution 60/1, paras. 155 and 156).
2. In paragraph 24 of its resolution 61/16, the General Assembly decided to review the implementation of the resolution at its sixty-fifth session.
3. In order to implement that decision, the President of the General Assembly, Joseph Deiss, requested the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, Octavio Errázuriz, to lead informal consultations and serve as Facilitator. The President informed the Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations accordingly by a letter dated 7 December 2010. The current report reflects the outcome of these informal consultations.

Preparation of the report

4. The present report is based on the views expressed by Member States during the course of three rounds of informal consultations of the General Assembly, held on 7 and 15 March and 4 April 2011.
5. In order to determine the main areas to be covered, the Facilitator organized informal consultations with various delegations and regional groups held in January 2011, which allowed him to identify the areas on which Member States wished to focus.
6. Subsequently, on 17 February 2011, the Facilitator sent a letter to the Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations proposing items for consideration during the first two rounds of consultations, without prejudice to the right of delegations to make statements they considered relevant.
7. The informal consultations held on 7 March 2011 were devoted to: (a) general considerations on the process of reviewing the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16; (b) the Development Cooperation Forum; and (c) the annual ministerial review.
8. For the informal consultations held on 15 March 2011, the topics proposed by the Facilitator were: (a) the relationship of the Economic and Social Council with other organs; (b) the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations

Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); (c) the working methods of the Council; and (d) other matters.

9. In a letter dated 21 March 2011, the Facilitator invited Member States to a third round of informal consultations to consider issues related to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on which delegations could be expected to have additional comments.

10. The third round of informal consultations, held on 4 April 2011, covered, in particular, the following issues: (a) the possibility of holding a meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum every year; (b) the preparatory process, level of representation and follow-up to the outcome of the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD; (c) possible changes to the agenda of the resumed session of the Council to be held in October; (d) reporting by the subsidiary bodies of the Council; and (e) improvement of the relationships between the Council and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

11. The section of the present report on conclusions and recommendations is based on the opinions and comments expressed by Member States during the informal consultations. The conclusions and recommendations are addressed to the President of the General Assembly, having been prepared pursuant to his request that the implementation of resolution 61/16 be reviewed and are the sole responsibility of the Facilitator.

I. Summary of the positions of Member States

12. The views, comments and suggestions summarized below, as expressed by Member States during the three rounds of informal consultations of the General Assembly, are structured around the topics identified by the Facilitator in his letters dated 17 February and 21 March 2011.

A. General considerations on the review of the implementation of resolution 61/16

13. A number of delegations stated that General Assembly resolution 61/16 had been an important positive step in strengthening the Economic and Social Council and in establishing the primacy of the Council in the discussion on and formulation of development policies. It had also fostered a constructive dialogue among Member States on ways to make progress towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

14. Several delegations agreed that General Assembly resolution 61/16 was relatively recent and that not much experience had been gained yet with its implementation. Nevertheless, it was felt that there was room for some improvement.

15. Several delegations said that the process should focus on the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 rather than on other aspects of the work of the Council that went beyond the provisions of the resolution or that involved fundamental changes.

16. One group of delegations stated that there was scope for improving the relationship between the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review. Such improvement would allow the Economic and Social Council to conduct a broad review of international cooperation for development and to formulate comprehensive policy responses. It would also strengthen the link between operational activities of the United Nations system and the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, as well as promote exchange of information on best practices for dealing with development-related challenges.

17. One delegation mentioned that there was scope for improving the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the Group of 20, and that the Council could contribute to the Group's development agenda.

B. Development Cooperation Forum

18. A group of delegations noted that the Forum was designed to serve as a platform for discussing all aspects of international development cooperation and to improve its governance, effectiveness and impact on the agreed development goals. It should, therefore, become the main international forum for discussing development policies, particularly in view of the current economic and financial crisis and its impact on the quality and quantity of development cooperation financing, and it should gain greater visibility.

19. One delegation was in favour of strengthening the Forum in its existing format, within the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council.

20. A group of delegations wanted to avoid introducing greater formality in the Forum. They expressed a preference for the debates taking place in the Forum to remain informal and proposed that there should be greater inclusiveness and broader participation by all stakeholders.

21. Another group of delegations thought that the Forum should review development cooperation trends, in particular in order to ensure that development cooperation reflects the needs of developing countries, that the quality and quantity of development financing is adequate for responding to the needs of developing countries and that development cooperation is adequately coordinated internationally to ensure that it achieves its goals and results.

22. Some delegations said that the Forum should be given more time to develop its full potential, since it had held meetings only in 2008 and 2010.

23. Other delegations believed that the issue addressed by the Forum should be more closely aligned with the agenda of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

24. One delegation proposed that the format of the Forum be organized around round tables or focus groups instead of plenary meetings. Another delegation suggested that more attention be paid to the nexus between the Forum and the high-level forums on aid effectiveness organized by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

25. One group of delegations announced that it was open to the possibility of holding the Forum annually instead of every two years as was currently the case, so as to mirror the annual ministerial review. Another group of delegations, while open

to exploring that possibility, emphasized that such a change could strain the human and financial resources of the least developed countries, especially if the Economic and Social Council continued to hold its sessions alternately in New York and Geneva. Another delegation expressed the willingness to discuss the possibility of holding the Forum every year if clear goals were set.

26. In addition, several delegations noted that holding the Forum every year could adversely affect the level of participation and the quality of the preparatory work, and result in more importance being attached to the process than to the substance.

27. Regarding the agenda of the Forum, most delegations expressed the view that priority should be given to topics related to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

28. Some delegations expressed a preference for the discussions held in the framework of the Forum to be more focused and technical. Another group of delegations said the following topics could be discussed at the Forum: aid effectiveness, new donors, South-South cooperation and mutual accountability regarding the Millennium Development Goals. Several delegations warned against determining the agenda of the Forum too early, as doing so might make the Forum less flexible and less able to provide a timely response to new challenges.

29. One delegation said that the Forum should deal with the existing shortcomings of the system of international development cooperation rather than tackle new topics. Some delegations suggested that the Forum address one or two topics per session.

30. Regarding the level of participation in the Forum, several delegations believed that the existing arrangement (senior working level) was adequate and that there should be a more interactive debate to encourage participation. Another group of delegations expressed the view that the level of participation should be higher.

31. With regard to the outcome of the Forum, one group of delegations expressed interest in exploring the possibility of producing a negotiated outcome document.

32. In the opinion of another group of delegations, the summary prepared by the President of the Council on the Forum adequately reflected all the opinions and lessons learned, served the purpose of sharing good practices and reflected the nature of the Forum as a platform for dialogue. The delegations were of the view that a negotiated outcome document would change the nature of the Forum and diminish its added value compared with other forums or bodies.

33. Regarding the follow-up to the Forum, one group of delegations stated that it would be advisable to establish a mechanism to follow up on commitments made and ensure continuity in the work of the Forum in order to preserve its relevance and effectiveness. Other delegations indicated that the summary prepared by the President of the Economic and Social Council was sufficient to ensure the successful fulfilment of the mandate of the Forum and that there was no need to create a formal follow-up mechanism.

C. Annual ministerial review

34. One group of delegations emphasized that the annual ministerial review was designed to review progress towards the attainment of the internationally agreed

development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and provide guidance to Member States, international organizations and others.

35. Most delegations spoke positively about the national voluntary presentations, which they said made it possible to review progress made towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and to exchange good practices and lessons learned.

36. One group of delegations invited developed countries to take advantage of the national voluntary presentations to exchange views on specific development topics.

37. Several delegations believed that lessons learned and good practices emanating from the national voluntary presentations could be disseminated better. Other delegations mentioned the need to increase participation by other stakeholders in the presentations and to ensure a more interactive debate on the presentations. It was also suggested that the topics of the presentations should be more clearly defined so as to allow for in-depth consideration.

38. Several delegations referred to the need to improve the level of participation in the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and particularly in the meetings on the national voluntary presentations. One delegation suggested that, to this end, the annual ministerial review should be held back-to-back with the opening meeting of the General Assembly in September. Another delegation was satisfied with the current level of representation.

39. One group of delegations emphasized the need to improve the annual ministerial review preparatory process at the regional level and that this could be done with the participation of the regional economic commissions. The delegations were of the view that this could also encourage higher-level participation in the annual ministerial review.

40. With regard to the possibility of developing a peer review mechanism, a large majority of delegations were in favour of maintaining the voluntary nature and related characteristics of the national voluntary presentations. They felt that not doing so could entail a risk of having a confrontational debate that could affect the level of participation and commitment to the process.

D. Relationship of the Economic and Social Council with other bodies

41. Several delegations mentioned the need for modest and incremental progress, rather than fundamental changes, in strengthening the relationship of the Economic and Social Council with other organs.

42. Other delegations stressed the need to bear in mind General Assembly resolution 64/289, on system-wide coherence, in order to promote synergies and improve the relationship of the Economic and Social Council with other United Nations bodies. Regarding the General Assembly, several delegations mentioned the importance of fostering a closer relationship between the Council and the Assembly and avoiding duplication, particularly with regard to the work of the Second and Third Committees of the Assembly.

43. One group of delegations stressed that it was sometimes necessary for the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to duplicate their work because the two organs could approach the same topics from different viewpoints.

44. Another group of delegations referred to the importance of enhancing the relationship between the President of the Economic and Social Council and the President of the General Assembly and between the Bureau of the Council and the Bureaux of the relevant Committees of the Assembly.

45. One delegation referred to the importance of improving the relationship of the Economic and Social Council with the Security Council, noting that in accordance with Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations the former may furnish information to the latter.

46. With regard to the relationship of the Economic and Social Council with its subsidiary bodies and the executive boards of funds and programmes, one group of delegations mentioned the importance of increasing the frequency of joint meetings and, in that connection, proposed that one or two days during the Council's resumed session in October be devoted to such interaction.

47. Another group of delegations stated that the format of the existing annual meeting of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council with the bureaux of its subsidiary bodies needed improvement. Functional commissions could address themes on the Council's agenda from their own viewpoint, as the Commission on Population and Development did for the theme of the annual ministerial review.

48. Several delegations expressed an interest in establishing a closer relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. One delegation suggested that the Chair of the Commission regularly brief the Council on the situation of the countries being reviewed by the Commission.

49. Several delegations were in favour of maintaining the existing practice of holding joint meetings between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, as those meetings created added opportunities to discuss topics of common interest. In that regard, one delegation indicated that it was preferable to keep a flexible format.

50. Another delegation indicated that it would be better to wait until the Peacebuilding Commission was fully equipped to fulfil its mandate before considering the creation of a new framework for relations between the Economic and Social Council and the Commission.

E. Special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

51. One group of delegations referred to the importance of the special high-level meeting in the context of the follow-up to the financing for development agenda and its role in building bridges between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD, as well as other entities. Future sessions of the meeting could be improved on the basis of the experience gained at the 2011 meeting.

52. Another group of delegations stressed that the importance and influence of the special high-level meeting was waning. There was a need to strengthen the level of

engagement of delegations in New York (to the level of Permanent Representative) and in capitals, as well as the level of participation of the organizations involved.

53. At the same time, one group of delegations believed that it would be premature to make significant changes in the mandate and format of the meeting since it was part of the financing for development follow-up process. However, some adjustments could be made.

54. One delegation suggested using the meeting to carry out a broader annual review of the coherence of the work of the various entities involved. Such a review could help to position the Economic and Social Council as the platform for discussions on economic and financial matters in the United Nations.

55. A number of delegations agreed that ensuring high-level participation in the meeting was important for the meeting's success. In that connection, one delegation proposed a more dynamic meeting format, similar to that of the annual meetings of the World Economic Forum, held in Davos, Switzerland.

56. Some delegations indicated that the level of participation could be improved if the date and agenda of the meeting were announced in advance and decided in close coordination with participating States and organizations.

57. One group of delegations stated that ensuring a better balance between the opening meeting and the thematic debates could be an incentive for higher-level representation. To this end, it was proposed that videoconferencing should be used or funds provided to ensure the participation of representatives at the ministerial level from developing countries.

58. With regard to the format of the meeting, several delegations agreed that a more interactive dialogue would stimulate debate. Some delegations proposed that the background documents and speakers' presentations should be circulated in advance.

59. Several delegations emphasized the need for the agenda to be prepared by the Bureau of the Council in close coordination with the organizations involved.

60. Several delegations proposed that the meeting focus on no more than one or two topics.

61. Concerning the follow-up to the commitments emanating from the meeting, one group of delegations said that there was room for improvement. They suggested exploring some ideas, including the possibility of reviewing the implementation of the commitments made by the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD at major United Nations conferences; having the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council promote the follow-up to the agenda of the thematic sessions throughout the year; having the secretariat of the Council prepare a report on the commitments made in the special meeting the previous year; and having the President of the Council send a letter containing his summary and the main results of the meeting to the institutions involved. The President could also be invited to participate in the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

62. According to another group of delegations, there was no need to introduce changes in the follow-up to the meeting and that it would be better to enhance the holistic nature of the process, improving coordination between the special meeting

of the Economic and Social Council and the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development of the General Assembly.

63. Another delegation said that the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD should be examined in the context of the financing for development process rather than the informal consultations on General Assembly resolution 61/16.

F. Working methods of the Economic and Social Council

64. One group of delegations emphasized the importance of giving new members of the Bureau the necessary guidance on the functions they are to perform. Such guidance would include a briefing on the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council and an analysis of the main decisions to be taken by the Council during the year. Similarly, there should be a meeting between the incoming Bureau and the outgoing Bureau at the beginning of each year in order to transmit experience and information. Greater importance should be given during the substantive session of the Council to the report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

65. Another group of delegations stated that the working methods of the Council could be improved by adopting an approach similar to that initiated by the Chair of the Second Committee in 2010, which concluded with the adoption of a formal decision. The delegations emphasized that the leadership of the President of the Council was critical in determining the success of Council sessions. They also suggested that Bureau members should serve for a longer term in order to increase continuity and efficiency in the Council's work.

66. One group of delegations referred to General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence and the relationship between the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council and the bureaux of the boards of the various United Nations funds and programmes. The meeting between those bureaux needed to be refined so as to make the work of the Council more relevant to the operational activities of the funds and programmes and vice versa.

67. One group of delegations emphasized the need to improve the efficiency of the secretariat of the Economic and Social Council by making additional information available to Council members at the beginning of each year. Member States should also be informed in advance about the relevant documents for each session or meeting.

68. Another group of delegations said that the secretariat and Bureau of the Economic and Social Council needed to work together more closely, especially in order to ensure that Council meetings and sessions were prepared well in advance.

G. Relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system

69. One group of delegations emphasized the importance of strengthening CEB while enhancing its transparency and accountability. The delegations were also in favour of dedicating more attention to reviewing the follow-up to CEB

commitments and mandates. They proposed that this be done in the third or fourth week of June, together with the review of the reports of the Council's subsidiary bodies.

70. Several delegations stressed the importance of the briefings convened by the President of the Economic and Social Council following the sessions of CEB, in accordance with paragraph 4 (c) of General Assembly resolution 64/289.

71. A group of delegations drew attention to the provisions of Articles 57 and 63 of the Charter of the United Nations, pursuant to which the Economic and Social Council may coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultations and recommendations.

H. Other matters

72. With regard to the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, one group of delegations indicated that duplication should be minimized. For example, while the goal of the coordination segment was to promote follow-up by the United Nations system to the ministerial declaration, its identity and relationship with the general segment needed to be clarified.

73. The view was expressed that general segment covered too many topics, and that the debates were often superficial. A possible solution would be to discuss the administrative work currently reviewed in the general segment outside the substantive session, for example at the Council's resumed session.

74. A group of delegations stressed that it would be useful to hold substantive discussions at the Council's resumed session in October.

75. One delegation, however, emphasized that postponing issues from the substantive session to the resumed session could blur the distinction between the goals of the two sessions.

76. Another delegation emphasized the need to improve the interaction between the operational activities segment and the coordination segment of the substantive session and suggested ways of improving system coherence in operational activities aimed at peacebuilding in post-conflict countries.

77. A group of delegations mentioned the need to improve coordination between the Council's agenda and the broader United Nations agenda so that the Council could promote effective follow-up to the mandates of major United Nations conferences by all relevant stakeholders.

78. Several delegations suggested that the interaction of the Economic and Social Council with entities outside the United Nations system and the visibility of the Council be improved. Some delegations stressed the importance of improving knowledge about the work of the Council among the general public and of increasing the participation of national parliaments in that work.

79. One speaker suggested that the Council's ability to react rapidly to economic and social crises be improved so as to increase its visibility in the eyes of the public.

80. One group of delegations emphasized that a critical aspect of the value added by the Council had to do with the Council's role in fostering interaction between

various stakeholders. This role increased the perception that the United Nations system was relevant in the context of addressing issues of global interest.

81. One group of delegations suggested that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations be strengthened.

82. One speaker indicated that a number of emerging issues, such as health, science and technology, and Internet governance, could benefit from consultations with non-traditional partners, civil society and the private sector.

83. Some delegations suggested exploring the possibility of creating a mechanism to monitor commitments made during the annual event on philanthropy.

84. At the informal consultation on 4 April 2011, delegations explored some ideas put forward during the two earlier rounds of consultations.

85. Differing views were expressed on the proposal to reformulate the agenda of the resumed session of the Economic and Social Council in October. Some delegations agreed that the resumed session could be used to review the reports of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions and the reports of the funds and programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. Doing so would provide more opportunities for dialogue and interaction.

86. A group of delegations warned against a fragmentation of the substantive session and called for reviewing the reports of subsidiary bodies in an integrated manner.

87. Several delegations emphasized the need to pay greater attention to the topic of regional cooperation and called for the exploration of ways to stimulate dialogue with the regional commissions on that issue at the substantive session.

88. One group of delegations agreed with the proposal to postpone the presentation of the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council to the third or fourth week of June, before the substantive session, since it was believed that doing so would lighten the agenda of the general segment.

89. Another group of delegations argued in favour of keeping the substantive session as it was. Some delegations mentioned the possibility of lengthening the substantive session to five weeks in order to ensure a better balance between the various topics.

90. It was proposed that other ways of streamlining the agenda of the general segment and improving its debates be explored, for example by clustering the review of certain reports.

II. Conclusions and recommendations

91. The main conclusions and recommendations below emanate from the informal consultations of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of its resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the mandate given to the Facilitator by the President of the Assembly.

Conclusions

A. General points on the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16

92. There is broad consensus that the goal of the informal consultations is to review progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16, pursuant to paragraph 24 of the resolution. Accordingly, the consultations focused on the issues mentioned in the resolution.

93. There is a feeling that the adoption of General Assembly resolution 61/16 is an important step in strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council.

94. Although General Assembly resolution 61/16 was adopted fairly recently, it is clear that there is scope for improving its implementation. Specific incremental measures could be introduced in this regard as a result of the informal consultations.

95. Some possible avenues identified during the informal consultations would need to be explored in greater depth and could be the subject of another process of informal consultations at a later stage.

B. Development Cooperation Forum

96. The Development Cooperation Forum is an important part of the functions assigned to the Economic and Social Council by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/16. It is expected that the Forum will play a central role in the discussion of issues related to development cooperation and that it will benefit from the broad participation of all stakeholders.

97. The creation of the Forum has spurred high expectations. It cannot yet be assessed whether the Forum has lived up to those expectations, since the Forum has been held only twice (in 2008 and 2010). It is nonetheless already possible to identify some areas where progress could be made.

98. There is no clear agreement yet on whether to hold the Forum every year instead of biennially.

99. The agenda of the Forum should focus on a limited number of issues and be closely linked to the broader agenda of the Economic and Social Council and of the United Nations in general in order to take better advantage of synergies.

100. Views differ on the need to improve the outcome of the Forum and on the creation of a follow-up mechanism.

101. There would be scope for improving the level of participation in the Forum. Ways should be found to attract high-level development cooperation officials, thus giving more impact and visibility to the work of the Forum.

102. The multi-stakeholder character of the Forum is seen as an important asset.

C. Annual ministerial review

103. The annual ministerial review is a major achievement of General Assembly resolution 61/16. In particular, the national voluntary presentations have made it possible to review the status of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at the national level.

104. The national voluntary presentations are a good way to share good practices and lessons learned. Their voluntary character should be preserved.

105. There is room for further improving the dissemination of the lessons learned and good practices arising from the national voluntary presentations. A United Nations website (<http://webapps01.un.org/nvp/home.action>) has been set up for this purpose, and further initiatives should be explored.

106. While countries making national voluntary presentations are usually represented at a high level, the overall level and type of representation and participation during the presentations could be improved.

107. The preparatory work for the annual ministerial review at the regional level could be enhanced further. There should also be a commitment by national authorities engaging in this process to be represented at an appropriate level during the national voluntary presentations. There is a clear role for engaging the regional commissions in further strengthening the regional component of the review process.

D. Relationship of the Economic and Social Council with other bodies

108. The relationship between the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations organs and bodies should be enhanced, as recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/289.

109. Improved coordination with the General Assembly is essential. Such improvement would require interactions between the President of the Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council, as well as between the Bureaux of the Council and of the Second and Third Committees of the Assembly.

110. The Economic and Social Council should tighten its relationship with funds and programmes, including through more frequent joint meetings to discuss issues of common interest.

111. The Economic and Social Council should coordinate more closely with its subsidiary bodies.

112. The relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission should be deepened in a way that adds value to the work of both bodies.

113. Similarly, there is some room for improving the relationship of the Economic and Social Council with the Security Council, as well as with other organs or bodies dealing with issues related to development.

E. The high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

114. The high-level meeting between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD is a central component of the relationship between these entities.

115. The high-level meeting is also an integral part of the financing for development follow-up mechanism endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 18 of its resolution 64/193.

116. There is scope for promoting the participation of higher-level officials in the meeting and thus enhancing the impact of its outcome.

117. Early preparations and consultations with Member States and the organizations concerned are important. Adjustments could be introduced in the format and agenda of the meeting so as to allow for a more interactive dialogue.

F. Working methods of the Economic and Social Council

118. The working methods of the Economic and Social Council should be improved through various initiatives.

119. In particular, the role of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council should be further enhanced, both at the level of the Council and with regard to its relationship with the Bureaux of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. Its interaction with the bureaux of the executive boards of the various United Nations funds and programmes and of the functional commissions should also be improved. Appropriate coordination between the Bureau and the secretariat of the Economic and Social Council is also important.

120. There is scope for improving the work of the secretariat.

G. Relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies

121. It is important that the Economic and Social Council exercise its coordination role *vis-à-vis* the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, while respecting existing legislative provisions, including the Charter of the United Nations.

122. Similarly, there should be effective interaction between the Economic and Social Council and CEB.

H. Other matters

123. The coordination and general segments of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council could be improved.

124. The Economic and Social Council has a critical role to play in promoting the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

125. The Economic and Social Council should interact more with a broader range of entities outside the United Nations system, such as national parliaments and representatives of academia, civil society and the private sector.

126. Additional efforts should be made to enhance further the visibility and understanding of the work of the Economic and Social Council.

127. There is scope for following up more systematically on the discussions at the annual event on philanthropy.

Recommendations

128. The following recommendations are based on the conclusions emanating from the informal consultations.

Recommendations requiring a mandate from the General Assembly

129. The General Assembly may consider:

(a) Inviting the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including international financial and trade organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and academia, to participate in the high-level meetings and events of the Economic and Social Council mentioned in Assembly resolution 61/16;

(b) Requesting the Council to have a closer relationship with funds and programmes, including through more frequent and substantive joint meetings, to discuss issues of common interest;

(c) Encouraging the Development Cooperation Forum to continue engaging all stakeholders in its work, including organizations of the United Nations, international financial and trade organizations, regional organizations, parliamentarians, civil society, academia, private sector representatives and local governments;

(d) Requesting the Council to enhance its coordination role vis-à-vis the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, while respecting existing legislative provisions, including the Charter of the United Nations;

(e) Requesting the regional commissions of the United Nations to contribute to the preparatory process for the annual ministerial review;

(f) Reiterating its request to the Council that it urge the functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies, within their own mandates, to contribute to the annual ministerial review, and inviting the Secretary-General to present such contributions in his report on the role of the Council in the integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields;

(g) Requesting the Council to continue to mainstream the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals throughout its work and activities and providing regular reports and assessments of its activities and those of Member States and

other actors as contributions to the continuing annual reviews of the Assembly on the progress made towards the achievement of the Goals;^a

(h) Requesting the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, building on the experience thus far, to organize additional joint meetings to discuss issues of common interest;

(i) Deciding to review the implementation of its resolution 61/16 in 2013, during the latter part of its sixty-seventh session.

130. It is believed that more time is needed to conduct a more substantive evaluation of some aspects of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16, such as whether to increase the frequency of the meetings of the Development Cooperation Forum and ways to improve the focus and follow-up to those meetings.

131. In addition, a new review would make it possible to follow up on any recommendations that the General Assembly may decide to make as a result of the present informal consultation.

Recommendations that can be implemented by the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council

132. Based on the informal consultation, the following points could be brought to the attention of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council:

(a) Development Cooperation Forum:

(i) The agenda of the Forum should focus on one or two items;

(ii) Priority should be given to items with critical impact on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals;

(b) Annual ministerial review: the national voluntary presentations should be enhanced through more interactive debates;

(c) Relationship between the Economic and Social Council and other bodies:

(i) The Bureau of the Council should maintain regular contact with the Bureaux of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly;

(ii) Joint substantive meetings between the Bureau of the Council and the bureaux of the executive boards of funds and programmes of the United Nations and subsidiary bodies should be held on a regular basis;

(d) High-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD:

(i) The Bureau of the Council should decide, in close consultation with Member States and the organizations involved, the date and agenda of the meeting by the end of the previous year, and the meeting should focus on one or two important items;

^a The General Assembly may wish to consider following up the special event to be held at its sixty-ninth session, in 2013, on efforts made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and on the theme of the annual ministerial review to be held in 2014, "Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future".

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- (ii) The format of the meeting should be improved so that it is conducive to more interactive debate, for example by ensuring that formal statements are delivered during the opening session and not during the thematic debates;
 - (iii) The documents for the meeting and statements of panellists and other participants should be distributed in advance;
 - (iv) Videoconferencing should be used in exceptional cases to ensure the participation of the main stakeholders;
 - (v) The President of the Council should convey the summary and main conclusions of the meeting to the executive heads of the financial and trade institutions involved;
 - (vi) The President of the Council should request and seek to participate regularly in the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in order to present the outcome and enhance the impact of the meeting;
 - (e) Working methods of the Council:
 - (i) A meeting should be organized to familiarize the members of the incoming Bureau of the Council on the Council's working methods and on the main decisions to be taken during the year;
 - (ii) The outgoing Bureau and the incoming Bureau of the Council should meet in January every year to exchange and share experiences;
 - (f) Relationship of the Council with the specialized agencies of the United Nations:
 - (i) The President of the Council should continue to convene periodic briefings for Member States with the secretariat of CEB, as established in General Assembly resolution 64/289;
 - (ii) The Bureau of the Council should improve substantive coordination with the relevant bodies of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system;
 - (g) Other matters:
 - (i) The Bureau of the Council should propose to the Council that it discuss, at the 2012 substantive session, a series of measures to give greater visibility to the activities of the Council and enhance its relationship with actors outside the United Nations system, such as parliamentarians, civil society organizations and representatives of the private sector and academia;
 - (ii) Similarly, the Bureau could propose to the Council recommendations for following up more systematically the discussion at the annual event on philanthropy;
 - (iii) The Bureau of the Council should organize a dialogue on regional cooperation with the regional economic commissions during the coordination segment, starting at the 2012 substantive session.

Recommendations that can be implemented by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Council

133. The secretariat of the Economic and Social Council should:

(a) Prepare proposals, for discussion during the 2012 substantive session, on how to improve the Council's working methods;

(b) Propose to the Bureau arrangements for providing advance information on relevant documents of the Council;

(c) Make additional efforts to enhance further the visibility and understanding of the work of the Council.
