

Closing Remarks

by

**H.E. Ambassador Sylvie Lucas (Luxembourg),
President of the Economic and Social Council**

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Mr. Under-Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of what has been in my view, and hopefully also in yours, a very successful session of the Economic and Social Council. I wish to thank all of you for your hard work and your determination to work together in a collaborative spirit, and especially all the Vice-Presidents of the Council for their able leadership.

I would also like to thank the many colleagues who have so skillfully facilitated agreement on various resolutions, as well as the members of the Secretariat and the UN system organizations, in particular the whole team around the Director of the Division of ECOSOC support and coordination, Mr. Nikhil Seth, as well as all the members of the Secretary of the Council, Ms. Jennifer De Laurentis' team, who have tirelessly supported our work throughout the process. My deep appreciation goes also to the members of my delegation, Mr. Philippe Donckel, Mr. Leo Faber and Ms. Christine Goy, who not only assisted me but also led successful facilitation processes on important texts. It has been truly a team effort.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our objective over the last months, and more particularly for this session, has been to move ECOSOC forward and translate into reality the vision of our Heads of State and Government contained in the outcome of the 2005 World Summit. I believe that we have made good progress. Let me highlight some of the achievements for this session and the path we tread to reach the positive outcomes.

We engaged in an intense and broad-based preparatory process. It is for the first time that preparatory meetings were held in three regions of the world. We were able to address many dimensions of the issue of health, and, I believe, our deliberations this year have put squarely public health at the centre of the development agenda. It is furthermore heartening that the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the high-level segment not only promotes consensus on issues ranging from communicable and non-communicable diseases to neglected tropical diseases, and from health systems and services to universal access to reproductive health, but also contains concrete measures to advance the realization of the global public health goals. This year's ECOSOC has set the stage for serious follow-up actions in the area of public health such as the development of action plans on health literacy or multi-sectoral partnerships on health challenges.

The candid national voluntary presentations by seven countries during the High-level segment set off stimulating discussions both on successful policies that could be replicated and on ways to address continuing development challenges. They were a testimony to the unique platform the Council provides to engage the global community in support of national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, the growing interest in participating in this exercise is reflected in the decision by 15 countries to volunteer for the 2010 Annual Ministerial Review. I would encourage countries to show a similar level of enthusiasm in volunteering to host regional ministerial meetings to focus on specific aspects of gender equality and empowerment.

A key message from the deliberations of the Coordination segment is that to address the impact of the current crises we need policies that ensure coherence across economic, social and environmental areas. To this end, we should work within the framework of sustainable development. It is time to fully embrace this concept, which is not new, and to deploy it so as to reconcile short-term sectoral policies and objectives with the long-term goal of sustainable development. The challenges ahead for the UN system in strengthening its efforts to promote sustainable development are not only about scaling up current initiatives, but also about developing the capacities to adopt more comprehensive approaches.

We have also heard the need for closer links between ECOSOC and the Chief Executives Board. We will try to find ways to address this issue in the future more effectively.

At its Operational activities segment, ECOSOC gave further impetus to efforts to implement the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of the UN system Operational Activities. I believe, as was the case this year that the Council will need to remain focused on its role to mobilize the UN system around the implementation of the TCPR while steering away from micromanaging the work of funds, programmes and specialized agencies. It is furthermore important that specialists of development cooperation continue to engage in the work of the operational activities segment, so as to root its guidance in realities on the ground.

The discussions at this year's Humanitarian segment were most informative and constructive. I will not try to hide my satisfaction that it was possible to adopt, in consensus, a very substantive resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, reaffirming important issues like the need for all parties to facilitate safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian workers, or the need to respect and adhere to international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles.

We have established over the last months a new level of engagement with the Peace-building Commission and I hope to further build on this foundation, through an enhanced dialogue, including with the Chairs of the country-specific configurations. As indicated by Ambassador Munoz, we intend also to organize mid-October a joint meeting of ECOSOC and PBC on the impact of the food and economic crises on countries emerging from conflict. There is undoubtedly a great potential for a closer cooperation and a strengthened relationship between the two bodies.

Distinguished delegates,

As you are all well aware, several mandates were given to ECOSOC by the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development held in New York at the end of last month.

As the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for economic and social questions and the central mechanism for system-wide coordination, the Economic and Social Council has undoubtedly a key role to play in fashioning a global response to this crisis, in an inclusive manner, with actions at the national, regional and international levels, and we will strive to fully implement the mandates allotted to the Council.

I am happy to say that we have already made some headway in this respect at the current Session.

Paragraph 58 of the Outcome document of the Conference had requested to invite the Director-General of the International Labour Organization to present the “Global Jobs Pact”, adopted by the 98th International Labour Conference, to the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session. As you all know, not only has Dr. Somavia responded favourably to my invitation and presented the “Global Jobs Pact” to the Council on the opening day of its Substantive session, but the Council has also welcomed the adoption of the “Global Jobs Pact” and encouraged Member States to promote and make full use of it, through a resolution it has adopted on 23rd of July.

Concerning the mandates contained in paragraph 56 of the Outcome Document, the one pertaining to the strengthening of the Financing for Development follow-up process, has, with the cooperation of all of you, been fully implemented. I will not recall once more the main elements of the recommendations we just adopted, but I believe,

ECOSOC has come forward with a framework which has true potential and it will be up to us to make full use of it.

With regard to the second mandate which originated already in the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, the request to examine the strengthening of institutional arrangements to promote international cooperation in tax matters, including the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, contrary to what I had signaled as a possibility in my letter beginning of July, it was not possible to start to address it at this Session. Perhaps, we can continue discussing the issue, after the next meeting of the Committee of Experts, whose mandate was just renewed.

I think we all agree that the other three mandates contained in paragraph 56, which are new ones, must be given thorough consideration. I know that some Member States would have liked to move on some of them, but two days before the end of the substantive session, there really was no time to delve into these matters. Thus, I believe, the best option was to request the Secretary-General to provide us with information on each of the three subjects, and to start, with this input, examining these important questions as soon as possible in the fall.

This information, to the extent possible, should be gathered and prepared in collaboration with the relevant entities, such as, inter alia, CEB, and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are also already working to set in motion preparations for the next Annual Ministerial Review, which will focus on gender equality and empowerment of women, and the second Development Cooperation Forum.

The first DCF, last year, made great strides in establishing the role of the Council as a forum for high quality independent debate on development cooperation, involving all stakeholders. The preparations for the second DCF will place a particular focus on mutual accountability in development cooperation, South-South and triangular cooperation as well as coherence in the way aid is managed to promote other forms of financing for development.

A number of regional meeting and symposia will be organized in order to ensure thorough and broad-based preparations. The first high-level symposium will be held in Vienna on 12 and 13 November, hosted by the Government of Austria. It will focus on building a more inclusive framework for accountable and transparent development cooperation. I invite Member States to engage in the DCF preparations, together with the range of stakeholders that are part of today's complex development cooperation architecture.

On the Annual Ministerial Review on the theme of gender equality and empowerment of women, I believe that our efforts to engage a multiplicity of stakeholders should be even stronger in the coming year. We should also ensure that we do not just “preach to the converted”, so to speak, but engage constituencies that, while essential to achieve the gender-related goals, have not yet been fully engaged.

Last but not the least, in order to ensure another positive outcome next year, we need to start preparations early, at all levels, which means in the fall.

I look forward to continue working with you towards the achievements of our common goals.

Thank you very much.