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RECOGNIZING NEED FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ACTS TO STRENGTHEN COUNCIL'S ROLE AS OVERSEER OF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

**Resolution on Economic and Social Council among Three Adopted Without
Votes;**

**Others Concern International Year of Reconciliation; International Criminal
Court**

The General Assembly, recognizing the need for a more effective Economic and Social Council as a principal body for coordination, policy review, dialogue and recommendations on economic and social development issues, today adopted a broad resolution strengthening the Council's role in overseeing system-wide coordination and the balanced integration of those United Nations policies and programmes aimed at promoting sustainable development.

Two other draft texts adopted today concerned the International Criminal Court and **2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation**.

Acting without a vote on the long-awaited Economic and Social Council draft, submitted by Assembly President Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa of Bahrain, the Assembly decided that, while maintaining the current segment structure of the Council's yearly substantive session, in addition to the humanitarian affairs segment, the Council should convene ad hoc meetings, on specific humanitarian emergencies on the request of affected Member States, and that such ad hoc meetings should raise awareness and promote the engagement of all stakeholders in support of international relief efforts aimed at addressing those emergencies.

Further to that text, the Assembly decided that the Economic and Social Council's biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum would be held in alternate years in the framework of the Council's high-level segment to review trends and progress in international development cooperation and to give policy guidance. The Assembly also reaffirmed the importance of the Council working with the new Peacebuilding Commission to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict and to assist them in laying the foundation for development towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction.

Calling the resolution an important milestone in realizing the vision of world leaders at the 2005 World Summit, the Assembly President said the text's adoption was also an acknowledgement of the central importance of development as a principal pillar of the United Nations. It would enable the launch of the annual ministerial review and Development Cooperation Forum during the 2007 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva.

It would also provide for the Council to respond to humanitarian emergencies by convening ad hoc meetings, and bring into sharper focus the linkages between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Council's ad hoc advisory groups on countries emerging from conflict. "The new resolution presents both a demanding responsibility and a tremendous opportunity for the Council to perform more effectively," she said.

Taking the floor following the text's adoption, regional groups from both the developed and developing worlds welcomed the Assembly's move to put the Council at the centre of the global effort to realize internationally-agreed upon development targets, including the Millennium Development Goals. India's speaker called for the enhanced Council and the Assembly to act as an independent voice helping developing countries assess disparities between predicted consequences of policies and on-the-ground realities, which would enhance the ability of those countries to participate in decision-making.

The United States' representative said that, while the ECOSOC, as a Charter body, was entitled to convene meetings as and when needed, it was important to stress that the Council should also ensure the efficient use of its session time while working to fulfil its mandate effectively. The United States' support for the resolution was, thus, contingent on its understanding that the text had no financial implications; the resolution did not specify the number or frequency of meetings that should occur, nor did it require any additional meetings.

Also acting without a vote, the Assembly, recognizing that reconciliation processes are particularly necessary and urgent in countries and regions of the world which had suffered, or were suffering, situations of conflict that had affected and divided societies in their various internal, national and international facets, proclaimed 2009 the International Year of Reconciliation.

It also invited concerned Governments and international and non-governmental organizations to support reconciliation processes among affected and/or divided societies, and to plan and implement adequate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of reconciliation,

including holding conferences and seminars and disseminating information about the issue.

Introducing the text, Nicaragua's representative said that the Year was a vehicle for creating a fraternal human society, based on values such as truth and justice, and for restoring the unity of mankind now separated by ethnic, religious and other kinds of conflicts. Reconciliation between those estranged by conflicts was the only way to confront today's challenges and the process and practice of reconciliation must be promoted by States; between men and women, nature and humanity, and wherever fraternity and justice were absent from human relations. The initiative had the support of Governments, institutions of higher learning, civil society groups, the alliance of civilizations and the culture of peace.

According to the draft on the International Criminal Court, the Assembly encouraged States parties to the Rome Statute that had not yet done so, to adopt national legislation to implement obligations emanating from the Rome Statute and to cooperate with the Court in the exercise of its functions. It encouraged States to contribute to the Trust Fund, established for the benefit of victims of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court, and for the families of such victims, as well as to the Trust Fund for the participation of least developed countries.

The representative of the Netherlands, tabling the text, which was also adopted without a recorded vote, said that the Court's annual report had clearly demonstrated that the Court was now fully operational with the judicial phase started, both in the field and in the courtroom, and the newly-established liaison office open in New York. The resolution served three main objectives, to indicate political support, to underline the relationship between the Court and the United Nations, and to act as a reminder of the need to cooperate with the Court.

Providing an explanation of position on the resolution on the Economic and Social Council were the representatives of Finland on behalf of the European Union, and South Africa on behalf of the G-77.

Speakers on the discussion concerning United Nations conference and summit follow-up were the representatives of Finland on behalf of the European Union, South Africa on behalf of the G-77, Ukraine on behalf of GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Republic of Moldova), Cuba, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, China, Nigeria, Belarus, Indonesia and India. The Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union also spoke on that item.

Venezuela's representative spoke in explanation of the resolution on reconciliation.

The Assembly will meet again at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 22 November to take up additional recommendations of the General Committee.

Background

The General Assembly met this morning to consider, in a joint debate, several key agenda items related to organizational and administrative matters, and economic growth and sustainable development. Member States were expected to examine specific topics, such as coordinated implementation of, and

follow-up to, the major United Nations conferences in the economic social and related fields; follow-up to the Millennium Summit; strengthening the United Nations system, and United Nations reform.

Among the documents delegations were set to consider was a report on the role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits, in light of Assembly resolution (document A/61/90-E/2006/84), which notes that the 2005 World Summit provided the Council with two major new instruments to advance this process; annual ministerial substantive reviews and development cooperation forums.

According to the report, to fully capitalize on the new opportunities, the Council and its subsidiary bodies would have to align their work with those new, expanded functions. It goes on to identify measures that could be taken by the subsidiary bodies of the Council to strengthen their contribution to the integrated follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits. If these changes are adopted, the Council system can make an important contribution to the achievement of the internationally agreed-upon development goals by the 2015 target, the report states.

To help strengthen the Economic and Social Council, the report says the Council should seek to ensure that individual follow-up processes are geared towards contributing to and facilitating a coherent, unified implementation of the internationally agreed-upon development agenda, not only in relation to reporting, but also analytically and in terms of policy relevance. The Council may consider adopting, as soon as possible, a multi-year programme of work for its annual ministerial reviews, taking into consideration the core policy issues of conferences and drawing on the experience of the multi-year programmes already adopted by some of the functional commissions.

Other arrangements made by the Council in relation to its annual ministerial reviews should be geared to enabling it to keep under constant review and comprehensively monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of the agenda related to the internationally agreed-upon development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to develop multifaceted strategies that effectively promote mutual reinforcement in the actions being taken in the pursuit of those goals.

Also before the Assembly is a note of the Secretary-General transmitting a World Health Organization (WHO) report on enhancing capacity-building in global public health (document A/61/383), which takes note of national and international efforts made to advance the health related development goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

It also describes the current state of key infectious diseases, such as human cases of avian influenza, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and polio, as well as a set of major health issues confronting developing countries and transitional economies, which have significant health, economic, social and political impact on individuals, communities and nations. The report further highlights a number of frameworks and strategies that can be used to prevent, detect, report, prepare and respond to outbreaks of disease. These include key

components of optimally functioning health systems required to respond to disease outbreaks and major epidemics. Ensuring the supply and retention of an adequate supply of trained health workers and securing the necessary national and community political will and financing resources are vital to the success of any effort.

Enabling national efforts, particularly those coping with limited capacity, is an organized international response grounded on the principles of cooperation, networks, partnerships and leadership, the report states. The United Nations system, particularly organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), offers considerable experience and assistance to catalyse and support national efforts.

Among the draft resolutions before the Assembly is a text on the report of the International Criminal Court (document A/61/L.21), by which the Assembly would encourage States to contribute to the Trust Fund, established for the benefit of victims of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court, and for the families of such victims, as well as to the Trust Fund for the participation of least developed countries, and acknowledges with appreciation contributions made to both trust funds so far.

The draft would also have the Assembly encourage States parties to the Rome Statute, that have not yet done so, to adopt national legislation to implement obligations emanating from the Rome Statute and to cooperate with the Court in the exercise of its functions and recall the provision of technical assistance by States parties in this respect.

A draft resolution on the International Year of Reconciliation, 2009 (document A/61/L.22) would have the Assembly, recognizing that reconciliation processes are particularly necessary and urgent in countries and regions of the world having suffered, or which are suffering, from situations of conflict that have affected and divided societies in their various internal, national and international facets, decide to proclaim 2009 the International Year of Reconciliation.

It would also invite concerned Governments and international and non-governmental organizations to support reconciliation processes among affected and/or divided societies and to plan and implement adequate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of reconciliation, including holding conferences and seminars and disseminating information about the issue.

A text on strengthening the Economic and Social Council (document A/61/L.24) would have the Assembly decide to maintain the current segment structure of the substantive session of the Council. It would decide as well that the Council should continue to promote global dialogue, inter alia, through strengthening existing arrangements, including; (a) The special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); (b) An annual high-level policy dialogue with international financial and trade institutions

held in the framework of a strengthened high-level segment of the annual substantive session of the Council; and (c) A discussion on a theme from economic, social and related fields to be decided by the Council and informed by a report of the Secretary-General.

The Assembly would further decide that the biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum will be held in alternate years within the framework of the Council's high-level segment and that it would, among other things, review trends and progress in international development cooperation and give policy guidance and recommendations to promote more effective international development cooperation; identify gaps and obstacles, with a view to making recommendations on practical measures and policy options to enhance coherence and effectiveness and to promote development cooperation for the realization of the internationally agreed-upon development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals; and provide a platform for Member States to exchange lessons learned and share experiences in formulating, supporting and implementing national development strategies.

Also by that text, the Assembly would decide that the Council should hold annual ministerial-level substantive reviews, as part of its high-level segment, and that such reviews should take a broad approach, focusing on thematic issues, such as the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, review progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of those conferences and their follow-up processes.

The Assembly would also emphasize that, in addition to the humanitarian affairs segment, the Council should convene ad hoc meetings, on specific humanitarian emergencies, on the request of affected member States and following a recommendation of its Bureau, and that such ad hoc meetings should raise awareness and promote the engagement of all stakeholders in support of international relief efforts aimed at addressing those emergencies.

The draft would also have the Assembly express its concern that insufficient provision of conference services and substantive support to the Council's meetings has, at times, impeded the Council's ability to fulfil its mandate, despite its status as a major United Nations organ. In that regard, the Assembly would decide to ensure provision of full and substantive support and conference services to the Council for all meetings necessary for it to enable it to fulfil its strengthened mandate.

Also by the text, the Assembly would recall its resolution launching the Peacebuilding Commission, which recognized the need to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction and to assist them in laying the foundation for development. In that regard, the Assembly would reaffirm the importance of interaction between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The Assembly would reiterate that the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission would be based on, among other things, requests for advice from the Council, with the consent of a concerned Member State in exceptional circumstances on the verge of lapsing or relapsing into conflict.

International Criminal Court

The representative of Netherlands introduced the draft resolution on the International Criminal Court (document A/61/L.21), saying that the Court's annual report demonstrated clearly that the Court was now fully operational. The judicial phase of its operations had started, both in the field and in the courtroom. The newly established liaison office in New York should enhance the relationship between the two organizations and should facilitate communications. All States should support the Court's efforts, particularly with regard to the arrest and surrender of accused persons.

He said that the resolution served three main objectives; it indicated political support for the Court as an organization, both for its aims and for its work; it underlined the importance of the relationship between the Court and the United Nations based on the Relationship Agreement between them, and it was a reminder of the need to cooperate with the Court.

A representative of the United States said her country's concerns about the Court were well known, including the Court's assertion of jurisdiction over nationals of States not parties to the Rome Statute and the lack of oversight. The United States would dissociate itself from consensus on the resolution.

She said her concerns were about "means, not about ends". The United States strongly supported the advancement of international criminal justice and accountability. It had supported the Security Council's decision to refer to the Court the serious crimes being committed in Darfur. This year, as before, the United States had asked to have language included in the draft resolution on the Court that would acknowledge that there were legitimate differences of views among States on the Court. The Court's supporters had refused that reasonable request, again. As the draft resolution called for the Secretary-General to report on implementation of the Relationship Agreement, the Secretary-General should also report on all assistance provided to the Court by the United Nations.

The Assembly then adopted the draft resolution on the International Criminal Court, without a vote.

Economic and Social Council

Assembly President Sheikha HAYA RASHED AL KHALIFA (Bahrain) submitted to the Assembly a draft resolution under the item strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (document A/61/L.24). She said that the resolution was an important milestone in realizing the vision of world leaders at the 2005 World Summit. It was also an acknowledgement of the central importance of development as a principal pillar of the United Nations. It would enable the launch of the annual ministerial review and Development Cooperation Forum during the 2007 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva. The text would also provide for the Council to respond to humanitarian emergencies by convening ad hoc meetings, and bring into sharper focus the linkages between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Council's ad hoc advisory groups on countries emerging from conflict.

The Assembly then adopted the draft as orally amended without a vote.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, in explanation of position after action, the representative of Finland said her delegation attached great importance to the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and strongly supported the resolution just adopted. The Union was pleased that the Council could now finally proceed with the planning for its upcoming substantive session and continue its broader work with reformed functions. Hopefully, the positive spirit that had characterized the negotiations on the text would also facilitate the timely agreement of any remaining questions during the Council's resumed session.

South Africa's representative, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China, also welcomed the adoption of the text, saying that it reaffirmed the Council's role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination in promoting the implementation and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic social and related fields. With the text's adoption, the Council would be able to better fulfil its role as the principle body for coordination and policy review, policy dialogue and recommendation of issues of economic and social development.

He also welcomed the new strengthened role of the Council's substantive session and the decision for the Development Cooperation Forum to identify gaps and provide policy guidance and recommendations towards enhancing internationally agreed-upon development cooperation. The Group also welcomed the recognition by Member States that the Council received insufficient support and conference services and considered it important that States had also recognized that such services should be provided to ensure that the Council's work was not hampered in any way.

The representative of India said that the adoption of the text paved the way for the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum, mandated by the World Summit. India had consistently maintained the view that it was primarily a question of political will, rather than of reinventing the Council, that would enable that body to effectively fulfil its mandate, relating mainly to oversight and system-wide coherence and coordination. One important function of the Development Coordination Forum would be to undertake regular, periodic review of international policies and their impact on development.

In the context of systemic issues, it would be important to implement the commitment towards enhancing developing countries' ability to participate meaningfully in decision-making through the provision of assisting such countries to boost their capacity to assess the impact of policy changes, he said. One had to look no further than the developing countries that were negatively affected by the structural adjustment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) than to recognize that there needed to be an assessment of disparity between predicted consequences and what really happened on the ground. There should be an independent body, working with developing countries, to facilitate such studies. The United Nations, led by relevant consultations between the Council and the Assembly, was best placed to do so, he said.

The representative of the United States said that, while the Economic and Social Council, as a Charter body, was entitled to convene meetings as and when needed, it was important to stress that the Council should also ensure the

efficient use of its session time while working to fulfil its mandate effectively. The United States' support for the resolution was thus contingent on its understanding that the text had no financial implications. The Department of General Assembly and Conference management must be accorded flexibility and time for adequate planning to ensure that it could utilize existing resources. The United States would also emphasize that the resolution did not specify the number or frequency of meetings that should occur, nor did it require any additional meetings.

Follow-up to Summits and Conferences

JARL-HAKAN ROSENGREN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said it was important to embed internationally agreed-upon development goals into country-led processes, in order to eradicate poverty and promote sustained economic growth, environmental sustainability and global prosperity for everyone. As the 2005 World Summit had emphasized, development must be based on global partnerships, and the European Union remained fully committed to supporting country-led sustainable development through actions on aid volume, debt relief, innovative finance mechanisms, trade and international institutions.

Turning to public health, he said that the Union welcomed the first report to the General Assembly on enhancing capacity-building in global public health, as health was vital to achieving the internationally agreed-upon development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It was useful, therefore, for the Assembly to consider an assessment of global progress towards health improvements. Many countries were still unable to cope with the burden of disease placed on their health systems because of inherent weaknesses in the systems, unpredictable and uneven funding and the dire lack of skilled human resources. The World Summit Outcome and last year's resolution on capacity-building in global public health provided excellent guidance to Member States on ways to improve health outcomes.

The Union welcomed the report's attention to and proposals on reproductive health issues and believed it was crucial to ensure universal access to HIV prevention and treatment for all people, especially vulnerable groups, he said. The Union reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing capacity building in global public health and was committed to work with partners to improve United Nations system-wide coherence on the basis of the Panel's recent recommendations of the Secretary-General High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence. The Union considered the links between development, humanitarian and environmental activities to be very important.

DUMISANI KUMALO (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China, said that the integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow up to, the outcomes of the United Nations major conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, was essential if the United Nations was to succeed in eradicating poverty. The global community was six years into the twenty-first century and a third of the way to the 2015 Millennium Development Goals-target of reducing poverty and hunger by half. Yet, billions still lived in degrading poverty. There was an urgent need for concerted multilateral action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as a means to solve economic and social problems and promote peace and security,

while creating an enabling international economic environment for the growth of developing countries.

He said that the United Nations had a vital and fundamental role to play in the promotion of an equitable global economic, financial and trading order. It should promote international cooperation for development and help ensure that all actions agreed-upon by the international community were implemented. The Organization should also help Governments stay fully engaged in the follow-up to the major conferences and Summits. The Group of 77 and China called for the full implementation of the relevant development follow-up resolution (document A/Res/60/265), which had clearly and succinctly outlined the necessary actions. The United Nations must strengthen the existing mechanisms and create other effective tools to review and follow up the implementation of the outcomes of all the major meetings in the social, economic, and related fields.

Turning to today's adoption of the resolution on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, he said that the Council's role as the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, had been reaffirmed. The Group of 77 and China once again reiterated the call to developed countries for the full and timely implementation of the global partnership for development to enable developing countries to achieve the goals and targets of the internationally agreed-upon development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

VIKTOR KRYZHANIVSKYI (Ukraine), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development — Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine -- said his group agreed that progress in developing a road map towards system-wide coherence of follow-up mechanisms had been slow, as had the establishment of all-encompassing development strategies that took into consideration the linkages between conference outcomes both within the United Nations system and at the governmental level. Efforts of the United Nations Chief Executive Board and the United Nations system at large, towards enhancing inter-agency coordination and integrating development goals at both the policy and operational, were welcome. However, systematic inter-agency cooperation and improving strategic and operational coherence across all areas were most important, particularly at the country level. The United Nations Development Group could help promote policy coherence by making better use of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

He said that the internationally agreed-upon development goals should remain an overarching framework for international development cooperation, and the cooperation, itself, should be pursued in a spirit of global partnership for development. The decision to launch the preparatory process to review implementation of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development had been welcome in that regard. A strengthened Economic and Social Council should be the principal body for the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences and summits and for coordination in implementation of internationally agreed-upon development goals.

PEDRO LUIS PEDROSO (Cuba) described the agenda for development as miles away from realization. He said that, lasting solutions to the issues of

official development assistance (ODA), external debt, foreign direct investment and international trade, remained a pipe dream. He pointed to disturbing indicators of poverty and said that the persistence of an unfavourable economic environment and an unjust world order had brought about a “cruel and terrifying landscape”, which marginalized developing countries. He called for developed countries to fulfil their commitments, made in major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social spheres, including the Millennium Development Goals. If the negative effects of the imposition of the neoliberal model in a globalized world were not duly addressed and the gap between the rich and the poor continued to increase, crises and conflicts were inevitable.

He said that with just 10 per cent of the \$1 trillion devoted to military expenditure, diverted to development, the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved. However, the industrialized world lacked the political will to make historic decisions to solve the structural inequalities of the international economic system. The solutions concerned the entire international community, without distinction of rich and poor and all must work within the context of true multilateral cooperation, based on the principles of solidarity, complementariness and mutual benefits. The steadfast political will of the richest countries in fulfilling their commitments was needed; he called that the hugest challenge to overcome.

MAGED ABDEL AZIZ (Egypt) said that developing countries had high regard for the role and mandate of the United Nations in the field of economic and social development and considered that the Organization’s duties in that field could not be duplicated by any other international body or in any other bilateral forum. With that in mind, developing countries opposed any attempts to shift such work in the social development field to organizations or groups outside the United Nations that might be “dominated by politicization and conditionality”.

He went on to say that, despite worldwide acknowledgement of the important role the United Nations played in economic and social development fields, many of the outcomes and resolutions that had emanated from relevant conferences and summits still had not been implemented. Even after difficult negotiations had led to the tabling of the draft on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, which had been before the Assembly today, Egypt looked forward to increased political will from development partners to assist the Council in conducting its newly assigned duties in the most effective and efficient manner.

Here, he also stressed that, along with adopting the resolution on the Council, should come, the acknowledgement that the work and profile of the Council’s subsidiary bodies should be enhanced, taking into account regional perspectives of the programmes implemented by those bodies. Moreover, Egypt supported enhancing subsidiary bodies, such as the regional commissions and technical committees, to counter efforts aimed at curbing their role or terminating them, altogether. On some of the specific recommendations in the reports before the Assembly, he supported the call for new and innovative approaches aimed at encouraging the private-sector and civil society in developing countries in the preparation and follow-up to the Council’s Annual Ministerial Review and Development Cooperation Forum.

Turning to the follow-up to globally agreed-upon development initiatives, he said that the modest progress in that regard, coupled with the fact that many developing countries were currently expected to miss the targets set by the Millennium Summit, were strong evidence that the implementation process was lagging. Towards that goal, he stressed the importance of the “development follow-up” resolution (A/60/265), adopted last June, which had affirmed the increase in resources available to operational activities for development on an “assured, continuous and predictable basis”.

MANSOUR BIN SALEH AL-SHALHOUB ([Saudi Arabia](#)) reaffirmed the importance of the role of the United Nations in handling the development challenges of the twenty-first century. Meeting those challenges required mutual cooperation and the five-year review was evidence of Member States’ efforts to garner support for the outcome of the international development goals, agreed to during United Nations conferences and summits. The world’s significant challenges called on the United Nations to consider ways to reform its working methods and enhance its ability at peacemaking and peacekeeping. Saudi Arabia supported reforms to the Security Council and measures that would increase transparency and active cooperation between all organs of the United Nations.

He said that the United Nations had to amend its performance and modernize its activities to keep pace with developments taking place throughout the world. Reform efforts must not be viewed in an abstract manner, but tied to the issues of the United Nations. The impact of any reform should be considered in terms of how much it would enhance the effectiveness of the Organization’s bodies. There was no doubt that making structural reforms to improve performance was an immediate necessity. At the same time, the unique characteristics of each society should also always be considered, and he noted that the dangers facing the world were not limited to certain countries. Today’s global challenges required international cooperation, respect and equality for all people. There could be not development without stability, he added.

LIU ZHENMIN ([China](#)) said it was the unshirkable responsibility of all countries to maintain the momentum of the internationally agreed-upon development goals and vigorously promote international development cooperation. Those goals could not materialize overnight and full implementation of the Millennium Development Goals should be the focus of global attention. Action at the national level, with attention to particular national conditions, was the only way that claims of “ownership” could be made and the international consensus must be embodied in national development strategies. It was essential for the United Nations to lead discussions on follow-up actions and it was necessary for relevant United Nations meetings to be pragmatic and action-oriented and to genuinely specify policies, expand consensus and find shortcomings and weaknesses to better mobilize and coordinate international actions.

He described recent discussions on United Nations system-wide coherence as very helpful and called for the private-sector and civil society to play an expanded role in implementing the development consensus. The Economic and Social Council had special advantages in pushing the internationally agreed-upon development goals, as it had the new tools of the

Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum. He was glad that the draft resolution on strengthening the Council had been accepted by all parties. Integrated and coordinated implementation required supervision, so it was necessary, therefore, to establish a United Nations-led unified and comprehensive framework for the progressive evaluation of development goals. China was a vigorous supporter and practitioner of implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. As a result, the living standard of the Chinese people had been improved by a fairly large margin.

He pointed out that three of the eight Millennium Development Goals were directly linked with health, and that the other goals were closely linked with public health. He welcomed the various strategies on public health capacity-building contained in the Secretary-General's report, including establishment of an emergency response system and global surveillance system, according to international health regulations, as well as increased public awareness, strengthened public health human resources, and the offer of assistance to Member States by the WHO and related international agencies. For three consecutive years, China had initiated a draft General Assembly resolution on strengthening capacity-building in public health, which supported the work of the WHO. The Chinese Government had made an enormous investment in public health capacity-building, parallel to the WHO's aim of "Health for All".

HAKEEM BABA AHMED ([Nigeria](#)) said the integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow-up to, United Nations conference outcomes held the key to the full achievement of all internationally agreed-upon development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. An integrated, coordinated and holistic implementation process was United Nations conferences into concrete actions that would help people, especially the poor and vulnerable. Agreement on the final text of resolution A/61/L.24 had paved the way for the strengthening of the Council's role as the central body for coordination, policy review and dialogue on development cooperation. Nigeria was pleased that Member States had reached consensus on that important resolution and hoped that measures would quickly be taken to let the Council perform its expanded functions.

He said that Nigeria looked forward to working with the United Nations system to promote development as a universal goal. Concrete steps to help countries achieve the targets of their national development strategies were vital. The first session of the Annual Ministerial Review would undoubtedly reveal that, six years after the Millennium Summit, sub-Saharan African was not on course to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Africa's capacity to help itself was severely constrained by its excruciating debt burden, lack of market access, poor infrastructure, limited capital flows and other factors. More needed to be done to meet the special needs of Africa. Nigeria hoped the biennial Development Cooperation Forum would help keep Africa on the "global radar screen" and mobilize resources for the global development goals and the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Turning to reform, he said it was Member States collective Charter obligation to provide sufficient resources for the implementation of all mandates entrusted to the Secretary General and his team. Reforms must cut across all

principal organs of the United Nations, in order to make the Organization more efficient, effective and responsive to current challenges. The reforms should not be viewed from the narrow perspective of cutting costs. Instead, the Assembly should carefully examine all measures and agree on the need to inject new resources, where necessary, for their full implementation. Nigeria also believed that the success of any Secretariat and management reform should be accompanied by transparent accountability measures and all reforms should support the United Nation's development agenda. The position and role of the General Assembly should be strengthened. Reform of the Security Council was overdue and urgent in order to make its decisions more legitimate and transparent.

SERGEI RACHKOV (Belarus) welcomed the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the draft resolution on the Council, which contained several important provisions for enhancing that body's potential to improve coordination within the United Nations system and increase the effectiveness of the United Nations work in support of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. He was pleased that provisions, such as the adoption of a ministerial declaration as an outcome of the high-level segment of substantive sessions; the establishment a multi-year work programme for the ministerial-level substantive reviews, and the convening of ad-hoc meetings on humanitarian emergencies, had been included in the final draft.

He said that the resolution was an important step towards ensuring appropriate financial and administrative support for the Economic and Social Council's newly assigned responsibilities. He believed in the strengthened Council and its ability to organize much needed international support for countries fighting poverty, hunger, social inequality, environmental degradation, natural disasters and infectious diseases. As a Council member, from 2007 to 2009, Belarus would contribute to the successful fulfilment of the Council's tasks.

PRAYONO ATIYANTO (Indonesia), aligning himself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the resolution on strengthening the United Nations system. Although the issue had been discussed time and time again, one-third of the world still lived in poverty. Progress thus, was crucial. The adopted resolution put the Council in a better position to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals and made it better equipped to address current challenges, such as poverty, malnutrition, hunger, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and natural disasters, to name a few.

He said that there was also an important link between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Council. As a country affected by the recent tsunami, he was pleased to note that, with the adoption of the resolution, the Council's role would be enhanced in terms of international relief efforts. He stressed that substantive support was needed, in order for it to fully perform its duties.

NIRUPAM SEN (India) said that the issue of implementation was the most primary element in the discussion. Apart from implementation, the key issues included those of resources and current developments.

Last but not least, he said, it was imperative that the unfinished agenda of United Nations reform be taken up. As financial transfers had totally outstripped

the exchange of goods and services, it was now necessary to consider the policy of the international financial institutions. Both the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization had diverged from their original mandates. For example, several countries had received bail-out packages, which, in some cases, had worsened the crisis. Furthermore, in the World Trade Organization, while the consensus was that borders were unimportant for the free exchange of goods, technology flows had been a different story, and that needed to change. Also crucial was to have an equitable and fair balance between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. While there was one veto in the International Monetary Fund, there were five in the Security Council. Indeed, that did not ensure optimal economic, political or social decision-making. Moreover, virtue without power was impotent, and vested interests needed to cease.

ANANDA FILIP, Inter-Parliamentary Union's Permanent Observer, referring to the resolution on strengthening the United Nations system (document A/61/L.24), said that democracy, together with development, was the best defence against conflict and the best guarantee for lasting peace. Moreover, the recent memorandum of understanding between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations Democracy Fund, and the consultations under way with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, augured well in terms of increased cooperation.

She said her delegation remained convinced that members of parliaments could play an extremely important role in building national political support for international action. She also believed that parliaments and their members could make a more direct contribution to the work of the United Nations.

It was imperative that the "disconnect" between the United Nations decision-making process and the national policies between the global and local levels be bridged, she continued. The 2006 Parliamentary Hearing held last week had indicated that that was indeed, possible. For one thing, participants in that hearing had felt that a new, embryonic parliament needed to be both nurtured and to receive as much assistance as possible. They had also argued strongly for placing democratically elected parliaments high on the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission's list of priorities.

2009 Year of Reconciliation

The representative of Nicaragua, introducing the draft resolution on the International Year of Reconciliation 2009 (document A/61/L.22), said that the proclamation for the Year was a vehicle for creating a fraternal human society, based on values such as truth and justice and for restoring the unity of mankind now separated by ethnic, religious and other kinds of conflicts. It provided new paradigms for the concept that it was impossible to live without others, but that it was possible to live in peace with them.

He said that there was no true human culture as long as war was considered an acceptable way of dealing with problems. Reconciliation was a way of embedding into culture the high ideals beyond petty concerns, a process that made humanity and the common good the cornerstone of development. Reconciliation between those estranged by conflicts was the only way to confront

today's challenges and the process and practice of reconciliation must be promoted by States; between men and women, nature and humanity, and wherever fraternity and justice were absent from human relations. The initiative had the support of governments, institutions of higher learning, civil society groups, the alliance of civilizations and the culture of peace.

Next, the draft resolution was adopted without a vote.

Speaking in explanation of position after action, the representative of Venezuela, referring to operative paragraph 6 on the role of the media in reporting on reconciliation processes, said that some media in her country had started inappropriate and undemocratic broadcasts and some from the United States were also calling for inappropriate actions, such as the assassination of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

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