

Ministerial Declaration-2002

“Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment submitted by the President of the Council: The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development”

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2002 of the Economic and Social Council, held from 1 to 3 July 2002, having considered the theme .The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development., and the report of the Secretary-General on the subject,¹ as well as the contribution of civil society, inter alia, through the NGO Forum, have adopted the following declaration.

1. We reaffirm that poverty eradication and sustainable development are the great ethical and human imperatives of our time. We reaffirm the right of everyone to education and that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being, without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.
2. We also reaffirm our commitment to the full and timely implementation of the goals, targets and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits and their follow-up in the areas of both health and education, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.²
3. We recognize that human resources development is a fundamental aspect of poverty eradication and vital to the process of sustainable development, contributing to sustained economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Health and education are in turn essential to human resources development and should be fully integrated into macroeconomic policies, including poverty reduction initiatives, and should accordingly be prioritized in national budgetary allocations to health and education.
4. We recognize the important role of health and education professionals in all countries and their need to upgrade their skills. Training and retention of health and education professionals are a major challenge, in particular in developing countries.
5. We recognize that people living in poverty must be placed at the centre of the human resources development process and encourage their participation in decision-making.
6. We recognize that better health and education go hand in hand, with progress in one area reinforcing progress in the other. To take advantage of that synergy, a multi-sectoral approach is needed. The mutually beneficial

development outcomes should be explicitly considered in the actual design and implementation of development strategies. To that end, we are committed to strengthening efforts at the national and international levels.

research and research capacity in developing countries. We encourage the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs, including anti-retrovirals, more widely available and affordable to all who need them in developing countries. Efforts should continue to ensure improved access to medicines and affordable health systems in line with the declaration on the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and public health adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, held at Doha in November 2001.

12. We welcome the work of United Nations organizations in addressing drug-resistant malaria. We encourage the stakeholders of the Roll Back Malaria Campaign and the Stop Tuberculosis Initiative to continue and intensify their efforts and call for full international support for their work. We stress the importance of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations, ongoing governmental programmes and other public-private partnerships that are effective in contributing to equitable health outcomes.

13. We reaffirm the commitments at the World Education Forum in Dakar to the effect that no country seriously committed to Education for All will be thwarted in its achievement of that goal by lack of resources. We will continue to mobilize political and public commitment and resources for Education for All. We recommend an integrated approach reaching beyond basic education, extending from primary to higher and technical and vocational education, and encompassing early childhood development, girls' education, adult education and lifelong learning, to maximize the impact of education on development and poverty reduction. Alternative or non-formal education can contribute in ways that complement formal education.

14. We acknowledge that although the developing countries have the primary responsibility for the development of their human resources, the role of the international community and the multilateral institutions is essential in providing assistance in building human resources in developing countries. North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation can play a significant role in meeting the challenges faced by developing countries. We strongly encourage partnership efforts aimed at advancing health and education goals.

15. We also underline the importance of increasing the access of all people to modern means of communication and information and stress the need to improve access, thereby increasing the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICT) to people in all countries, in particular developing countries. We underline the potential role of ICT in improving health and education services. We invite the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force and the World Summit on the Information Society in 2003 and 2005 to pay particular attention to bringing the benefits of ICT to people in all countries through human resources development.

16. We call for concerted efforts to significantly increase investments in health and education with the aim of providing access to health care and education to persons living in poverty and vulnerable groups. We recognize that current levels of investment in health and education are inadequate. We urge an increase in resources from all sources to provide adequate and sustained resources for effective programmes.

17. We recognize that a substantial increase in official development assistance (ODA) and other resources will be required to provide adequate and sustained resources for effective programmes that will improve the quality of and strengthen the necessary delivery systems for health and education. We urge developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries and 0.15-0.20 per cent of GNP of developed countries as ODA to least developed countries, as reconfirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and encourage developing countries to build on progress achieved in ensuring that ODA is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets. Recipient and donor countries, as well as international institutions, should strive to make ODA more effective.

18. We recognize that trade is one of the most important sources of fostering development and financing human resource development. A universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, as well as meaningful trade liberalization, can substantially stimulate development worldwide. We also agree th

the Least Developed Countries in Brussels on 20 May 2001, particularly those commitments related to building human and institutional capacities.

22. We call upon the United Nations system to strengthen its catalytic and supportive role in promoting human resources development in the areas of health and education. To that end, the United Nations system should continue and strengthen its efforts to:

- .(a) Support national-, regional- and global-level efforts to integrate human resources development programmes into poverty reduction strategies on the basis of national ownership and priorities;
- .(b) Help countries build institutions and local technical capacity;
- .(c) Promote human resources development programmes that facilitate the access to ICT in all countries, in particular developing countries, to build digital opportunities;
- .(d) Build partnerships with stakeholders based on common goals and strategies and mutual responsibility and commitment and use sector-wide approaches;
- .(e) Strengthen mechanisms for disseminating knowledge and good practices for effective development cooperation in human resources development.

23. We stress the pivotal role of the Council in maintaining the focus on

5 See General Assembly resolution S-27/2, annex, sects. I and III.

6 See General Assembly resolution S-26/2, annex.

7 *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

8 A/CONF.191/11.