

Volume 4— Number 3

# ECOSOC News

## Newsletter on the work of the United Nations Economic and Social Council

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The 54-member Economic and Social Council serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and to the United Nations. It makes or initiates studies and reports; makes recommendations on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters; and promotes respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Subsidiary bodies, commissions and committees of ECOSOC carry out its year-round work. ECOSOC strengthens cooperation within the United Nations system, coordinates the work of the specialized agencies and consults with non-governmental organizations. A substantive session of the Council is convened annually in July, and supplementary formal meetings as well as informal panels on topical issues are held throughout the year.

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During its resumed organizational session held on 21 October 2005, the Economic and Social Council adopted the High-Level Theme for its 2006 substantive session, which is the following:

**"Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development"**

The theme for the 2006 coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council is the following:

**"Sustained economic growth for social development, including the eradication of poverty and hunger"**

The theme for the coordination segment is the theme for the second year of the multi-year work programme (MYWP) of the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council. Informal consultations will begin shortly in order to complete the initial four year work programme of ECOSOC, before its substantive session in 2006.

The 2005 World Summit has expressed an unequivocal determination to ensure the full and timely realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Summit also reaffirmed the need for the United Nations to play a fundamental role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and the coherence, coordination and implementation of development goals and actions agreed upon by the international community.

The Summit has also recognized the need for a more effective Economic and Social Council as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the international development goals agreed at the major United Nations summits and conferences, including the Millennium Development Goals.

To perform these functions, the Council is expected to (i) hold annual ministerial-level substantive reviews to assess progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the major UN summits and conferences, including the internationally agreed development goals; (ii) hold a biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum to review trends in international development cooperation; (iii) respond better and more rapidly to developments in the international economic, environmental and social fields as well as support and complement international efforts aimed at addressing humanitarian emergencies and (iv) play a major role in the overall coordination of and in promoting coherence in the functioning of the funds, programmes and agencies. ECOSOC is also expected to work closely with the Peacebuilding Commission. To ensure that follow-up to the 2005 World Summit is implemented efficiently and quickly, it is important that other tasks also be considered.

For example, it will be vital to ensure that developing countries formulate comprehensive national development strategies to

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achieve the MDGs and adopt them in 2006, and that donors provide the necessary support. These issues are inter-related because part of ECOSOC's revised mandate is to ensure follow-up of the relevant outcomes of the major UN Conferences and Summits. Drawing on existing processes, ECOSOC will need to work out a mechanism for monitoring follow-up that can take effect as soon as possible.

The President of the General Assembly has invited Ambassador Cheick Sidi Diarra of Mali and Ambassador Johan C. Verbeke of Belgium to co-chair the consultations on ECOSOC reform and development over the coming weeks. To help move the consultations on ECOSOC reform further forward, the President of ECOSOC has already

presented a Working Paper on the "Implementation of the 2005 World Summit decisions regarding the ECOSOC" ([http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/documents/2005/ECOSOCsummitfollow\\_up.pdf](http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/documents/2005/ECOSOCsummitfollow_up.pdf)), and a Working Paper on the "Framework for the Implementation of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals including the MDGs" ([http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/documents/2005/Draft\\_Elements\\_on\\_Implementation\\_Framework.pdf](http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/documents/2005/Draft_Elements_on_Implementation_Framework.pdf)).



UN Photo/Mark Garten

This breakfast meeting was attended by H.E. President Pervez Musharraf (Pakistan);

Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; H.E. President Alfredo Palacio (Ecuador); H.E. President Alfred Moisiu (Albania); H.E. Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt (Belgium); H.E. President Mathieu Kérékou (Benin), on behalf of the Least Developed Countries; H.E. President of Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria), on behalf of the African Union, H.E. Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam (Mauritius) and Chair of AOSIS; H.E. Mr. Abdelwahab Abdallah, Foreign Minister (Tunisia); Mr. Rodrigo de Rato, Managing Director of IMF; Mr. Paul Wolfowitz, President of World Bank; and Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

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The Bureau presentations were followed by interactive dialogues with participation of H.E. Mr. Tang Xiajuan, State Counselor (People's Republic of China); H.E. Mr. Paul Robertson, Minister of Development (Jamaica); H.E. Mr. Nobutaka Machimura, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Japan); Mr. Louis Michel (European Commissioner for development and humanitarian aid); H.E. Mr. Sichan Siv, Ama4.T(.9(c)razil):-2.1( -1.1)5.5(Mr. Paul )TJT80.0006 TSoc inXiajuc157 Til

The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council, and by H.E. Mr. Mousa Gibril Bala-Gaye, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Gambia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of friends of Guinea-Bissau. The meeting discussed the situation in Guinea-Bissau and how to mobilize the support of the international community.

At the meeting, statements were made by H.E. Carlos Gomes Junior, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau; H.E. Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal;

H.E. Mr. João Bernardo de Miranda, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Angola; H.E. Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal; H.E. Dr. Mohamed Chambas, Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); H.E. Dr. Nkosazana C. Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa; H.E. Mr. Aminu Bashir Wali, Permanent Representative of Nigeria; H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg, Permanent Representative of Brazil; Mr. Arjan Hamburger, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Netherlands; and H.E. Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa,

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Participants commended the government of Guinea-Bissau for the organization of successful legislative and presidential elections which resulted in the return to constitutional order on 1 October 2005. The partnership approach as recommended by the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea Bissau (E/2003/8) was considered instrumental in the transition process. Participants also praised the

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Another Special Event of the Economic and Social Council on the “Avian Flu”, held on Thursday, 3 November 2005, was the second in a series launched by the Council in response to the new mandate given to the Council by the

2005 World Summit to “develop its ability to respond better and more rapidly to developments in the international economic, environmental and social fields” and to “support and complement international efforts aimed at addressing humanitarian emergencies.”

The Special Event, chaired and opened by the President of ECOSOC, H.E. Mr. Munir Akram of Pakistan, was well-attended by delegations, representatives of the United Nations organizations, and civil society. It began with an opening statement by H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. This was followed by a

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Agriculture, Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations (FAO); Dr. David  
Heymann, Representative of the Director-  
General of the World Health Organization

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Resources should therefore be put into expanding production of anti-virals as well as seasonal flu vaccines to meet potential rather than current demand. Research and development into effective vaccines and investment in manufacturing capacity was, therefore, urgently needed as the lead time between the emergence of the virus and the production of the vaccine must be as short as possible to minimize the death toll. The issue of the appropriate use of intellectual property rights in ensuring adequate and affordable supplies of vaccines and medicines was also raised.

A number of participants pointed to the role of partnerships in effectively responding to avian flu. It was noted that private entities can help improve veterinary health surveillance, building capacity and improving impact. They can also engage community organizations in stimulating changes in behavior and can also assist with the mobilization of resources.

A larger role for regional organizations was considered as crucial, particularly in establishing regional coordination mechanisms for early warning and surveillance capacity building. A number of participants noted the establishment of an ASEAN Task Force on Highly Pathogenic Influenza in December 2004 as a best practice that could be replicated in other regions. The establishment of regional stockpiles for antiviral

drugs to allow for rapid deployment in the 24 hours following the infection was proposed by one country.

Participants stressed a central role for the United Nations system, supported by its technical agencies, the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Health Organization, in the coordination of local, national, regional and global preparations for a potential human influenza pandemic. In this connection, the coordination function vis-à-vis development banks, donor agencies, private entities, non-governmental groups, humanitarian agencies and professional bodies was emphasized. The issue of the effective streamlining of coordination was raised so that excessive time was not diverted from operational issues. Delegations were assured that when the world is at imminent risk of pandemic influenza, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and the country inter-agency humanitarian team within countries will be mobilized and ready for response.



UN Photo/Mark Garten

From 16 to 18 November 2005 the Government of Tunisia hosted the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which presented an opportunity for a review of progress since the first phase of the Summit held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003. The Geneva phase helped develop a common vision of the Information Society and adopted a Plan of Action for its realization. The Tunis Summit focused on the key issues of Internet governance, financial mechanisms to bridge the digital divide as well as on implementation and follow-up process to the Geneva

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This publication presents the key debates that took place in the Economic and Social Council meetings on the theme of the High-Level Segment of 2005 "Achieving the Interna-

For more information on the Economic and Social Council, please visit:

<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/>

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