

**ECOSOC BUREAU MEETING WITH CHAIRPERSONS**

**OF ITS FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS**

**NEW YORK, 27 JANUARY 2009**

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DEVELOPMENT**

Madame President,

Let me start by congratulating you for your election as President of ECOSOC. I offer you my full collaboration as chairperson of one of the functional commissions of ECOSOC, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

It is important that the chairs of the functional commissions have the opportunity to meet with you and the newly elected bureau at the beginning of the year in order to discuss how we can increase the synergy of our work with that of the Council and to strengthen policy coherence between the Council and its functional commissions, and to consider ways in which its subsidiary bodies can contribute to ECOSOC's Annual Ministerial Review theme for 2009, which will be on "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health".

**I. ECOSOC's coordination with its subsidiary bodies**

There are many things that can be said, but I would like to focus on three interrelated elements:

a) The importance of the role of ECOSOC in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major UN Conferences, b) The WSIS and the CSTD with its new mandate, and c) Coordinating the ECOSOC's machinery.

I understand that the **first point** should be clear for those related to ECOSOC's work. It was recognized by the 2005 World Summit, and there is a logical reason for this decision made by the General Assembly: Outcomes of UN Conferences and Summits need to be implemented in a coordinated way.

This leads me to the **second point: WSIS and CSTD**. As you may know, the World Summit on Information Society was held in two phases, in Geneva (2003) and in Tunis (2005). It was a long process, in which we obtained important outcomes. One of the last negotiate issue that persisted until the summit itself in Tunis was related to the follow-up: what to do with the decisions and recommendations?

I participated in those negotiations, and I have to say that in Geneva - where the Prepcom took place - delegations were not thinking on the role of ECOSOC. There were many different proposals, but not one referred to ECOSOC.

Few of us were aware of the important and necessary role that ECOSOC has on the follow-up to summits and conferences, and we started to press the rest in considering this option. To make it operational, we thought at the same time of subsidiary body could be well placed to serve as the focal point for this task. And it is in Geneva where one of the functional bodies of the ECOSOC holds its session: the CSTD.

Until 2005, the CSTD's mandate was focused mainly on issues related to science and technology. The CSTD was created in 1992 and it started with force and hope. But as years passed, it began to lose its force and creativity, and it became a commission that needed to be steered up again.

In Tunis it was agreed that the ECOSOC will oversee the follow-up of the WSIS outcomes, through the CSTD, and that this body should be reformed. The GA adopted resolution 60/252 by which it requested ECOSOC to be responsible for the follow up to WSIS. Subsequently, ECOSOC adopted Resolution 2006/46 that reformed the CSTD in order to allow it to efficiently address its new mandate on WSIS follow up.

The new mandate energized the Commission and raised its profile and visibility. Since 2007, a number of activities, panels and meetings related to ICTs and Information Society take place in May back-to-back with the annual session of the CSTD. The active participation of ITU, an important agency based in Geneva and works directly on issues related to ICT and WSIS implementations, as well as a vibrant civil society related to information society that participates in the CSTD's sessions.

I am mention all these points because it is important to understand here in New York that good and effective coordination between ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies is very necessary, especially those that are not based in New York.

**This takes me to the third point.** When I was at the Chilean Mission in Geneva, we felt sometimes that the work done in the CSTD was not well known in New York Headquarters. Diplomats in Geneva perceived that here in New York colleagues did not understand what was going on with regard to the issues dealt there, particularly with regards to WSIS. But this perception has changed positively in recent years. In 2008, ECOSOC dedicated an important time to discuss CSTD and ICT matters.

Some recommendations:

- 1) It is important to insist on the coordinating value of ECOSOC.
- 2) Need to look for more interaction between ECOSOC's bureau and its subsidiary bodies, in particular those that are not based in New York.
- 3) The presence of ECOSOC's President in the Commission's session could be helpful.

4) ECOSOC should continue to play a role aimed at avoiding duplication and overlapping functions, encouraging coordination between its subsidiary bodies, ensuring that the use of resources is properly oriented in their mandates related to the follow-up of the implementation of the outcomes of the UN Summits.

5) Finally, there is need for better linkage through the Web. The ECOSOC Secretariat could improve its website, with clear links and updated information of its subsidiary bodies. In this connection, the ECOSOC Secretariat should work closely with secretariats of the commissions. In our case, UNCTAD serves as CSTD's secretariat.

## **II. Ways in which its subsidiary bodies can contribute to ECOSOC's Annual Ministerial Review theme for 2009, on "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health"**

UNCTAD, in its capacity as Secretariat of the CSTD, has prepared some inputs on this issue mentioning three areas in which the CSTD can draw on in order to contribute to the Annual Ministerial Review's discussion on global public health:

- Findings from its work on past substantive themes;
- Capacity-building initiatives recommended by CSTD and undertaken by other UN organs;
- Through its liaison role with the WHO and other agencies in the area of the WSIS action line on eHealth.

Information on these areas is included in the compilation that has been circulated here, and I hope it could be useful. So, let me be brief you in this topic, and I would like to stress some points that I think could be important, especially from the point of view of CSTD as WSIS follow-up coordinator. And this has to do with the third area mentioned before.

As you know, the ECOSOC/CSTD role in coordinating the follow-up of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes actually gives them a double and interrelated mandate:

- 1) To oversee the realization of WSIS goals towards achieving an all-inclusive information society, to bridge the digital divide and to assist developing countries to benefit fully from the potential of information and communications technologies.
- 2) A major challenge for implementation of WSIS outcomes is to realize the potential of ICTs to contribute to addressing the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Public Health is relevant to both perspectives. In the first case, in the Geneva Plan of Action and in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, WSIS has included an area on eHealth (Action Line C7) that is coordinated by WHO and ITU. With regard to the MDG there are three targets (4, 5 & 6) related to Health, and in these three targets ICTs are important.

The CSTD holds a one-week session every year during the month of May in Geneva. As I said there are different activities planned during those days, in which different organizations

participate, most notably ITU, and civil society and public sector. During the 5-day session, normally the CSTD has to give some time to deal with its traditional mandate, and to focus on its WSIS mandate. I have stated that in this task, the CSTD must also address the MDGs.

In order to comply with what ECOSOC has requested its subsidiary bodies, I will ask the CSTD Secretariat to include in our May session a panel dedicated to the AMR theme on Public Health. And I hope we will be able to work with WHO in that regard.

### **Looking ahead**

As you may know, CSTD holds an inter-sessional panel every year during the month of November. The last one was held in Santiago, where we were able to give an important focus into the global sphere and to the regional one. In our case, we discussed the Latin American experience in development-oriented policies for a socio-economic inclusive information society, giving some time to discuss the role of science & technology and ICTs in addressing the food crisis.

I will propose to the CSTD to look ahead in time and to include in the agenda of the next inter-sessional panel and of the 13<sup>th</sup> CSTD session in 2010 the theme that ECOSOC has decided for the 2010's AMR: "Implementing the internationally agreed goals in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women".

Finally, as you know the UN General Assembly has been requested to make an overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes in 2015. ECOSOC and CSTD will have important work to do in the next years, and to achieve good results it is necessary that member States, regional and UN agencies and other stakeholders such as civil society, private sector, and academia work together in the implementation of the decisions made in Geneva and Tunis in the World Summit on the Information Society.

ECOSOC and the CSTD should see how to integrate this review with the broad review on the MDGs that will be organized that same year.

Thank you for your attention