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ECOSOC reform

(working paper of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus)

1. The Economic and Social Council is the best suited body within the United Nations, due to the breadth of its Charter mandate, to tackle the whole array of economic, social, humanitarian, environmental and other related issues.

2. Our concerted efforts at ECOSOC reform should be aimed at reinstating the role of this body as the locus for system-wide co-ordination on socio-economic and related matters.

3. The primary focus of reform should be maintained on the relevant provisions of the Summit Outcome (paragraphs 155 and 156) that envisage an enhanced role for ECOSOC in five areas

- Global dialogue;
- High-Level Development Cooperation Forum,
- Co-ordination role;
- Response to emergencies;
- Interaction with Peace-building Commission.

4. Belarus commends the efforts of Co-Chairs of the consultation process Ambassador Johan C. Verbeke of Belgium and Ambassador Cheick Sidi Diarra of Mali to accommodate the interests of all major groups in working out a comprehensive draft resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on ECOSOC reform. In general Belarus supports its major provisions.

5. We think that a high-level dialogue on global policies and trends in the economic, social and environmental fields and a biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum should take place in alternate years as part of the High Level Segment of the substantive annual sessions of ECOSOC.

6. Annual Ministerial-level substantive reviews to assess progress in implementation of decisions of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including the internationally agreed development goals should become the second part of the High Level Segment of the substantive annual sessions of ECOSOC.

7. Since there is a dominating opinion that every year the ECOSOC should adopt only one negotiated ministerial declaration Belarus considers that the declaration should be the outcome of the annual Ministerial-level substantive reviews (AMR) because AMRs are to have a clear thematic focus and concentrate their attention on thematic clusters built around the outcomes of the major United Nations

conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including the Millennium Development Goals.

8. The Economic and Social Council should establish a multiyear programme of work for the Ministerial-level substantive reviews.

9. The Economic and Social Council should provide an opportunity for countries to make voluntary national presentations on/undertake voluntary reviews of the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including the Millennium Development Goals.

10. Member-States should be actively involved into the process of choosing the themes for the high-level dialogue.

11. The high-level dialogue, Development Cooperation Forum and the annual Ministerial review should not negatively affect the work of coordination and general segments of the annual substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council.

12. Belarus is a strong advocate of making the role of ECOSOC in strengthening the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance more prominent one. In this regard we support the idea of convening ad-hoc meetings of ECOSOC on humanitarian emergencies in addition to the usual business of the humanitarian segment of the annual substantive sessions of the Council. At the same time these ad-hoc meetings should be convened not only upon recommendation of the Bureau but also upon requests of Member-States.

13. We are working on the premise that significant work has been done in 2004 and 2005 to optimize the agenda of the plenary meetings and the Main Committees of the United Nations General Assembly. Some our decisions in this regard have already proved to be mistaken.

In view of the above we don't see a rational in reviewing the current distribution of work between the General Assembly, its Committees and the Economic and Social Council as proposed in paragraph 26 of the draft resolution on ECOSOC reform dated 26 January 2006.

14. Being an advocate of an integrated approach to the issues of peace and development within the United Nations Belarus supports the idea of strengthening links between the ECOSOC and the Peace-building Commission, including taking action on the advice of the Peace-building Commission, as appropriate and in accordance with the mandate of the Council.