



**Remarks by India at the informal session on
Strengthening of ECOSOC
on May 05, 2005**

We thank the President for convening this informal session on strengthening of ECOSOC. We welcome this opportunity to exchange views with other delegations on this important subject, especially as we have just concluded discussions on Cluster IV issues on institutional reform in the March 21 report of the Secretary-General in the informal sessions of the General Assembly.

We are grateful to the Secretariat for making available the advance unedited version of the report of the UN Secretary-General which, as you pointed out in your introductory remarks, seeks to amplify his own recommendations with regard to ECOSOC in his March 21 report. We hope to be in a position to comment in detail on these recommendations, especially those contained in Section III on the role of the UN system in paragraphs 89-108 of the report, at a later date.

We perceive the strengthening of ECOSOC to be an integral part of the comprehensive process of UN reform. As we strive towards progress on other aspects of UN reform, it is important that we try to achieve significant progress in this area as well.

We would appreciate a clear enunciation of how ECOSOC can fulfil functions envisaged for it under the Charter, particularly Chapters IX and X, especially Articles 55, 56, 60, 62, 64 and 66. We would like, in particular, to seek clarifications on practical ways of how ECOSOC can be empowered to perform the oversight, co-ordination and policy-guidance functions envisaged under the Charter with respect to its own functional commissions and subsidiary organs, UN Funds and Programmes, and the Specialised Agencies of the UN system.

We would have liked greater clarity on practical suggestions or operational recommendations for giving effect to the objectives outlined in the non-paper on functions of ECOSOC. For example, it would have been useful to deal with some practical suggestions on ways of promoting ‘coherent and coordinated approaches’ and ‘consolidating links between UN and the Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO’; ‘giving greater focus to implementation and follow-up’ of the Millennium Declaration; ‘maintaining international attention and support’ for post-conflict peace-building; and strengthening the role of ECOSOC as the ‘central mechanism for system-wide coordination’.

To give another example, practical suggestions on how the Chief Executive Board could be invited to play a pro-active role in the work of ECOSOC would have been useful for our discussions. In this context, it is not quite clear as to how the inter-governmental interface of the Council with the CEB as a whole is proposed to be achieved.

Given the current system of consideration of agenda items, it is not clear as to how the Council can hope to ‘pro-actively stimulate debate on topical issues’.

The purpose of consolidating links between the UN and the Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO should be in order to influence their activities in favour of advancing the development agenda and to enable ECOSOC, and the UN in general, to re-emerge as the most influential forum in support of development.

On the peace and development linkage, the objectives appear to parallel closely those of the proposed Peace Building Commission. It would be important to avoid duplication of these discussions and to ensure that the discussions here and those held elsewhere on the Peace Building Commission are dovetailed appropriately.

The discussions on modifying the present segmented organisation of work into a more flexible calendar should take full account of the discussions that took place during 2004 in the plenary and the Second, Third and Fifth Committees on re-organising the work of the General Assembly. It may be recalled here that the idea of shifting sessions of some of the Main Committees from the main part was discussed extensively but was found impracticable. Given the calendar of meetings of the subsidiary bodies of both the General Assembly and ECOSOC, there may not be much value in embarking on a similar exercise in respect of ECOSOC at this stage. However, we are open to considering constructive suggestions from other delegations in this regard.

Similar considerations would apply to holding of different segments separately. In particular, we wonder about the desirability of holding the operational activities segment in conjunction with the annual meeting of the UNDP/UNFPA Board. This is because the operational activities segment is, at least in theory, expected to deal with policy aspects that relate to the activities of all Funds and Programmes whereas the Executive Boards, again at least in theory, are expected to deal with operational and management questions of individual Funds and Programmes, rather than policy.

We would be somewhat sceptical about the advisability of agreeing on a multi-year thematic programme on humanitarian segment; in our view, the Council should retain a degree of flexibility in order to address situations of emergencies caused by natural disasters or other complex humanitarian emergencies which, by their very nature, are unpredictable.

We would support strongly the need for timely submission of reports by the Secretariat. Poor quality of reports and inordinate delays in their presentation, have prevented meaningful discussions and robust outcomes in case of several meetings.

There has been considerable discussion on the need to avoid duplication in the work of the ECOSOC with that of the Second Committee of the General Assembly. We would have been happier if there were a similar discussion on the need to avoid duplication in work of the ECOSOC, particularly the Commission on Human rights which is at present a functional commission of ECOSOC, with the work of the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

We remain committed to engaging with other delegations and would like to assure you of our co-operation in further consideration of this topic.

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