



FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) ministerial declaration on generating full and productive employment and decent work for all**

**Ministerial declaration of the high-level-segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, July 2006, on “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”**

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## I. Introduction

### (a) Background

1. Following the outcome of the United Nations General Assembly World Summit of September 2005, it was decided that the high-level-segment of ECOSOC for 2006 should focus on the theme of “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 Office accepted an invitation from the President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Al Hachani of Tunisia, to collaborate with the United Nations secretariat to prepare the meeting. Members of the Governing Body and representatives of constituents were also closely involved in this process. The outcome of its high-level-segment – a ministerial declaration<sup>1</sup> – further endorsed decent work as a central development goal and gave specific guidance on coordination arrangements for its effective implementation by the United Nations and other multilateral organizations.
2. The ministerial declaration identifies a number of concrete steps aimed at furthering implementation of the 2005 World Summit commitment to make the goal of full and productive employment a central objective of national and international policies, and systematically monitoring progress.

### (b) Preparatory process

3. Major efforts were made throughout the preparatory process by the ILO and its constituents, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), and the President of ECOSOC, to ensure that the agenda of the session received due prominence among the international community. The ILO made substantive contributions to the Secretary-General’s report and the Conference Room Paper. ILO representatives made numerous contacts at all levels with the permanent missions of member States both in New York and Geneva. An ILO interdepartmental working group was very active through the whole preparatory process. Members of the Governing Body – Mr. Mdladlana, Mr. Funes de Rioja, Mr. Blondel, Ms. Burrow, Ms. Byers, Ms. Fernando, Ms. Goldberg and Mr. Richards – were active at preparatory events and at the high-level segment. Mr. Funes de Rioja also contributed a working paper to the round-table dialogue on creating decent work opportunities with productivity growth.
4. Preliminary events leading to the high-level segment included a major informal preparatory event in April, at which member States, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders (employers’ and workers’ organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, civil society) examined the issues and made recommendations. In addition, the Forum on Productive Employment and Decent Work, organized by DESA in May, focused on the promotion of decent work opportunities and concentrated on policy guidance for solutions and heard presentations by distinguished specialists on a wide range of issues. Participants included high-level policy-makers, United Nations agencies, the World Bank, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I. For all related documents, see <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/>.

**(c) High-level segment**

5. The high-level segment convened exceptionally wide and numerous high-ranking national delegations. The opening session heard addresses on the theme of “working out of poverty” by the Prime Ministers of Pakistan, Norway and Mozambique, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General and the Director-General of the ILO. A significant number of ministers and high-level government officials with diverse portfolios, including foreign affairs, economic cooperation, planning and labour, also participated in the discussions, together with agency heads and high-level officials from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Commission and other institutions. The presence of such a mix of ministers and others helped ensure comprehensive discussion of the many and varied aspects of employment generation and decent work in the round-table discussions. In their view, major improvements are required to harmonize national and international policy-making in the areas of finance, trade, migration, social security and the labour market in order to facilitate a common approach to such interlinked problems.
6. The high-level segment also involved a general debate and four high-level round-table dialogues (Creating decent work opportunities with productivity growth; Meeting the challenge of employment creation in Africa and the least developed countries (LDCs); Globalization and labour migration; and Innovation at work – National strategies to achieve gender equality in employment).<sup>2</sup> These were followed by a dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of the ECOSOC Regional Commissions on the regional dimension of the theme of the high-level segment. The high-level segment had before it the following reports:
- report of the Secretary-General (E/2006/55);<sup>3</sup>
  - report of the Committee for Development Policy on its Eighth Session;<sup>4</sup>
  - overview of the World Economic and Social Survey 2006: Diverging growth and development (E/2006/50);<sup>5</sup>
  - world economic situation and prospects as of mid-May 2006 (E/2006/CRP.3);<sup>6</sup>
  - a Conference Room Paper on the theme of the high-level-segment.<sup>7</sup>
7. The high-level segment included ministerial panel discussions on the two main new functions assigned to ECOSOC by the 2005 Summit – holding annual ministerial reviews of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals, and convening biennially a development cooperation forum. Speakers concurred, first, that these two functions have the unique potential of making the

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Secretary-General (E/2006/55).

<sup>4</sup> E/2006/33, Supplement No. 13; <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/devplan/index.html>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/index.html>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp.html>.

<sup>7</sup> E/2006/CRP.2 [http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/hls2006/esc06\\_HLS\\_CRP\\_Final\\_28\\_April.pdf](http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/hls2006/esc06_HLS_CRP_Final_28_April.pdf).

Council the main forum of accountability for the implementation of the United Nations Development Agenda, and the central platform for bringing together all actors engaged in development policy and international development cooperation, thus making a major contribution to system-wide coherence; second, that the effective exercise of both functions will require the broadest possible mobilization of resources and political capital not only within but also outside the United Nations system. There were frequent references to the potential of ECOSOC, through these new functions, to become the “Development Parliament”, as the Deputy Secretary-General termed it. The potential of ECOSOC and its high-level segment as instruments of policy coherence – the Council's unique capacity to bring a wide range of actors together on key policy issues such as employment – is in the view of many highly significant but still underutilized. The new functions to be carried out by ECOSOC in relation to the MDGs and agreed development goals could mark a turning point in this respect.

8. The Council held a dialogue during the high-level segment with the co-chairpersons and some members of the United Nations Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on System-Wide Coherence. The main message from the Panel was that the need for coherence and consistency within the system has never been more imperative.

## II. ECOSOC ministerial declaration

### (a) Significance

9. The ECOSOC ministerial declaration is the first major internationally agreed text to be adopted since the World Summit of September 2005, and the first to be finalized during the high-level segment itself for some years. Its wholehearted endorsement of the Decent Work Agenda is a major endorsement of the work of the ILO.

#### 10. The ministerial declaration –

- provides an unprecedented level of support and commitment to employment generation and the Decent Work Agenda with its four strategic objectives as defined by the ILO, reinforcing in concrete terms its centrality to the national and international development agenda;
- highlights its key role in eradicating poverty and hunger, improving economic and social well-being for all and achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development of all nations, and a fully inclusive and equitable globalization;
- calls on governments and other relevant institutions to consider the impact of their policies in employment and decent work for all, including ensuring coherence of policies;
- recognizes that full and productive employment and decent work for all are a priority objective of international cooperation;
- reaffirms that an employment strategy is a fundamental component of any development strategy and that macroeconomic policies should, inter alia, support employment creation and take into account the social impact and dimension of globalization;

- places the ILO’s substantive agenda at the centre of United Nations system activities to achieve sustainable development and the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and incorporates this in the 2015 time frame foreseen at the Millennium Summit;
- acknowledges the many and varied linkages between decent work and the United Nations system development activities at all levels, and the value of decent work for related policy formulation. This shows the strong potential of decent work as a basis for policy coherence in many fields, bringing convergence between the interests of people and societies with those of finance and economic growth, while at the same time promoting environmental sustainability and addressing key concerns in the socio-economic, trade and development spheres;
- requests the entire United Nations system (United Nations bodies and specialized agencies) and invites the international financial institutions to pursue employment and decent work dimensions in their programmes and activities, and encourages practical steps in this regard, bridging intergovernmental and inter-agency aspects;
- invites the ILO to play an active role in United Nations system-wide action to mainstream the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in national development frameworks and the multilateral system;
- requests the ILO to develop time-bound action plans to 2015, in collaboration with all relevant parties, to achieve significant progress in both policy and operational programmes in implementing the declaration and the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit and the World Summit for Social Development, and sets a review process.

**11.** The ministerial declaration is a firm and concrete political basis for continued efforts to ensure effective implementation of the Decent Work Agenda at the global, regional and country levels and to foster cooperation, coordination and coherence around it through the activities of the United Nations system and other organizations. Further opportunities to do so include the forthcoming session of the Commission for Social Development (February 2007), which is to discuss the theme of “promoting full employment and decent work for all”.<sup>8</sup>

## **(b) Follow-up**

**12.** The ministerial declaration mentions the ILO in a number of paragraphs (paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 9, 19, 29, 34, 36 and 37), referring to all the ILO’s strategic objectives and a wide range of key ILO concerns in many other paragraphs, including labour law and rights, gender, migration, globalization, corporate social responsibility and youth employment.

**13.** Together with the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit to put employment generation and decent work at the centre of national and international development strategies, the ECOSOC 2006 ministerial declaration has built a very solid platform for ILO action within the United Nations system and the multilateral system as a whole. In this regard, the focus of the ILO’s action is shifting to the implementation and delivery of decent work by the multilateral system, in particular at the country level, and the first results are already expected in 2007. Paragraph 34 refers specifically to ILO Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). These implications of the outcome of the 2006 ECOSOC high-level segment will need to be reflected in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2008-09. The following immediate steps could be considered in this regard.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csod2007.htm>.

## 1. *Within the ILO*

14. The ministerial declaration has been brought to the attention of all ILO units at headquarters and in the field, asking them to build on it in their day-to-day work as appropriate. This is of particular significance to the DWCPs that are being elaborated or will be elaborated in the near future, as well as for the implementation of existing programmes.
15. The contents of the declaration have been analysed in terms of operational implications for the Office and corresponding roles and responsibilities have been assigned. These will be built into the Programme and Budget for 2008-09, currently under consideration.
16. The declaration also creates an opportunity to reinforce the role of the network of ILO constituents at the country level and of the Governing Body in giving effect to the ministerial declaration. In this regard, the adoption of the declaration adds further weight to the conclusions concerning the role of the ILO in technical cooperation adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2006.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. *In the United Nations and multilateral system*

17. In their declaration, ministers also “encourage all relevant agencies to collaborate actively in the development of the tool kit to promote decent work” that is currently being developed by the ILO, at the request of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). The CEB High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) had an exchange of views on this matter at its 12th Session (Rome, 29-30 September 2006) and agreed to pursue its discussions at the next session of the Committee. This process will reinforce efforts already under way to develop ILO DWCPs and connect them to international development frameworks for national policy formulation, in line with the conclusions concerning the role of the ILO in technical cooperation, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2006.<sup>10</sup>
18. Bilateral discussions with major international organizations are needed to elaborate practical modalities for collaboration, as requested in the ministerial declaration. In such discussions the ILO should endeavour to maximize the return on joint efforts and ensure that advocacy results in the effective assimilation of the Decent Work Agenda by other organizations. This should also be pursued at the *regional level*, involving as appropriate the main regional groupings, development banks and other major development actors.
19. Particular attention is needed to relations with the Bretton Woods institutions and other international financial and economic institutions so as to ensure that decent work is firmly embodied in poverty reduction efforts through the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process (see paragraph 38 of the ministerial declaration).
20. Since many of these processes also relate to follow-up to the MDGs, it is most welcome that the United Nations Secretary-General in his final report to the General Assembly has proposed that, since

... world leaders further agreed to several other important targets at the 2005 World Summit, I am therefore recommending the incorporation of these commitments into the set of targets used to follow up on the Millennium Declaration. This includes: a new target under

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc95/pdf/pr-19.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

Millennium Development Goal 1 to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies and our national development strategies ...

He adds that further technical work to select the appropriate indicators would:

... build on the ministerial declaration on Employment Generation and Decent Work, adopted at the 2006 session of the Economic and Social Council, which calls for the development of ten-year action plans and assigns the Council a clear role in monitoring progress in its implementation.<sup>11</sup>

21. The ministerial declaration is of particular significance in the current context of United Nations reform. It demonstrates the potential for coherent action by the system in pursuit of a goal that requires action in a number of policy fields at both national and international levels. The recognition of the importance of connecting the United Nations and the wider multilateral system to a powerful popular concern in most countries – the demand for decent work opportunities – is also most welcome.
22. *The Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization may wish to recommend that the Governing Body –*
  - (a) *welcome the adoption by the United Nations Economic and Social Council of the ministerial declaration on 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;*
  - (b) *endorse the proposals for ILO action concerning follow-up on the implementation of the ministerial declaration, as described above; and*
  - (c) *note that, within the ILO, follow-up on the implementation of the ministerial declaration needs to be addressed in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2008-09.*

Geneva, 23 October 2006.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 22.

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<sup>11</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/61/1), para. 24.

## Appendix I

### United Nations Economic and Social Council: Substantive session of 2006

#### *Agenda item 2*

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

#### Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment

*We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2006 of the Economic and Social Council, held in Geneva from 3 to 5 July 2006,*

*Having considered* the theme “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”, as well as the report of the Secretary-General on the subject,<sup>1</sup>

*Recalling* the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields,

*Recalling* the 2005 World Summit Outcome,<sup>2</sup>

*Having considered* the *World Economic and Social Survey 2006: Diverging Growth and Development*,

*Recognizing* that the total number of people unemployed worldwide reached a new high in 2005, even though the global unemployment rate remained unchanged, and that half of the world’s workers, most of them women, are unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their family members out of poverty,<sup>3</sup> and hence emphasizing the dual challenge of creating new productive jobs and improving the quality of existing ones,

*Have adopted* the following declaration:

1. We are convinced of the urgent need to create an environment at the national and international levels that is conducive to the attainment of full and productive employment and decent work for all as a foundation for sustainable development. An environment that supports investment, growth and entrepreneurship is essential to the creation of new job opportunities. Opportunities for men and women to obtain productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity are essential to ensuring the eradication of hunger and poverty, the improvement of the economic and social well-being for all, the achievement of sustained economic growth and sustainable development of all nations, and a fully inclusive and equitable globalization.

<sup>1</sup> E/2006/55.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/1.

<sup>3</sup> US\$2 a day poverty line.

2. We recognize that full and productive employment and decent work for all, which encompass social protection, fundamental principles and rights at work and social dialogue are key elements of sustainable development for all countries, and therefore a priority objective of international cooperation.

3. We recognize the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization as an important instrument to achieve the objective of full and productive employment and decent work for all.

4. We strongly support fair globalization and resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies and our national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. These measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, and forced labour. We also resolve to ensure full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work.

5. We resolve to promote full and productive employment and decent work for all, inter alia, by:

(a) Respecting, promoting and realizing the principles contained in the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, recognizing the central role of the International Labour Organization in this regard;

(b) Making continued efforts towards ratifying – where Member States have not done so – and fully implementing the International Labour Organization conventions concerning respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, namely, freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to organize and bargain collectively, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, as well as the effective elimination of child labour and discrimination in respect of employment and occupation;

(c) Considering the ratification and full implementation of other International Labour Organization conventions concerning the employment rights of women, youth, persons with disabilities, migrants and indigenous people.

6. We reaffirm that an employment strategy that aims to promote full, freely chosen and productive employment, as well as decent work for all, with full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work under conditions of equity, equality, security and dignity, should constitute a fundamental component of any development strategy. We further reaffirm that macroeconomic policies should, inter alia, support employment creation. The social impact and dimension of globalization should be taken fully into account.

7. We reaffirm our determination to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, recognizing that these are critical for achieving sustainable development and for efforts to combat hunger, poverty and disease. We are determined to implement our commitments to promote and protect all women's human rights by, inter alia, ensuring equal access to full and productive employment and decent work.

8. We recognize that violence against women and girls is a serious obstacle to the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, and of sustainable development, and reaffirm our commitment to elaborate and implement strategies and policies, including targeted measures, in order to fulfil the obligation to exercise due diligence to

prevent all forms of violence against women and girls, provide protection to victims, and investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators of such violence.

9. We underline the need for the consistent use of a gender mainstreaming strategy for the creation of an enabling environment for women's participation in development that requires multisectoral, integrated approaches and a range of measures, including political commitment at the highest levels; institutional and organizational change; the adoption and implementation of sector-specific policies and programmes; the establishment and enforcement of legislative frameworks in line with any obligations undertaken under international human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and International Labour Organization conventions; adequate resources and gender-responsive budget initiatives; accountability and monitoring mechanisms; and capacity-building and public awareness-raising.

10. We affirm our commitment to develop and implement strategies that give persons with disabilities everywhere equal opportunities to full access and productive employment and decent work on an equal basis with others and without any kind of discrimination, including by promoting a labour market and a work environment that are open, inclusive and accessible to all and by ensuring just and favourable conditions of work.

11. We reaffirm our commitment to develop and implement strategies that give youth everywhere a real and equal opportunity to find full and productive employment and decent work. In this respect, noting that almost half of the unemployed people in the world are young people, we are determined to mainstream youth employment into national development strategies and agendas; to develop policies and programmes for enhancing the employability of youth, including through education, training and lifelong learning that meet labour market requirements; and to promote access to work through integrated policies that enable the creation of new and quality jobs for young people and facilitate access to those jobs, including through information and training initiatives.

12. We recognize the importance of the work of the Youth Employment Network as a peer exchange, support and review mechanism, and invite Member States, the United Nations and partner organizations to strengthen and expand the Network at the national, regional and international levels.

13. We stress the important nexus between international migration and development and look forward to the General Assembly High-level Dialogue on international migration and development to be held on 13 and 14 September 2006 as an opportunity to discuss the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development in order to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize their development benefits and minimize their negative impacts.

14. We reaffirm the importance of promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education, the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health and the access of all to primary health care as part of the effort to eradicate poverty, promote full and productive employment and foster social integration. We recognize the continued need to address the impact of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and other major infectious diseases on social and economic development.

15. We emphasize that good governance at the international level is fundamental for achieving sustainable development. In order to ensure a dynamic and enabling international economic environment, it is important to

promote global economic governance through addressing the international finance, trade, technology and investment patterns that have an impact on the development prospects of developing countries. To this effect, the international community should take all necessary and appropriate measures, including ensuring support for structural and macroeconomic reform, a comprehensive solution to the external debt problem and increasing the market access of developing countries.

16. We call upon all countries to promote good governance, which is essential for sustainable development, and reaffirm that sound economic policies, solid democratic institutions that are responsive to the needs of the people and improved infrastructure are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment creation, and that freedom, peace and security, domestic stability, respect for human rights, including the right to development, the rule of law, gender equality, market-oriented policies and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies are also essential and mutually reinforcing.

17. We recognize that appropriate institutions and regulation, including frameworks for social dialogue, are important elements for the effective and fair functioning of labour markets. This includes the adoption and implementation of labour laws that protect workers rights.

18. We encourage Governments and other relevant institutions, where appropriate, to consider the impact of their policies on employment and decent work for all, including ensuring coherence of policies.

19. We recognize that, in the context of globalization, countries need to devise policies that enable them to pursue both economic efficiency and social security and develop systems of social protection with broader and effective coverage, which should be guided by each country's needs and circumstances, and in this regard invite the international community, including the international financial institutions and the International Labour Organization, to work together to assist, as appropriate and upon request, the developing countries, in their efforts.

20. We reaffirm that, with three quarters of the world's poor living in rural and agricultural regions mostly in developing countries, rural and agricultural development should be an integral part of national and international development policies, and working out of poverty requires urgent efforts to improve productivity and raise incomes in rural farm and non-farm sectors given the importance of livelihood security for subsistence farmers in developing countries. This should include substantial improvement in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support; and increased investment, including foreign direct investment, in physical infrastructure and product diversification, as well as increasing the value-added content of exports. We call for enhanced support for agricultural development and trade capacity-building in the agricultural sector in developing countries, including by the international community and the United Nations system, and encourage support for commodity development projects, especially market-based projects, and for their preparation under the Second Account of the Common Fund for Commodities.

21. We re-emphasize that rural and urban areas are economically, socially and environmentally interdependent and that cities and towns are engines of growth that contribute to the development of both rural and urban human settlements. Integrated physical planning and balanced attention to rural and urban living conditions are of crucial importance for all nations. Full advantage must be taken of the complementary contributions and linkages between rural and urban areas by giving appropriate attention to

their different economic, social and environmental requirements. While addressing urban poverty, it is also essential to eradicate rural poverty and to improve living conditions, as well as to create employment and educational opportunities in rural settlements and small and medium-sized cities and towns.

22. We reaffirm that the eradication of hunger and poverty, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development, and invite all countries to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, with the developed countries taking the lead and all countries benefiting from the process, taking into account the Rio principles, including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as set out in principle 7 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,<sup>4</sup> as called for in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation).<sup>5</sup>

23. We recognize that the increasing interdependence of national economies in a globalizing world and the emergence of rule-based regimes for international economic relations have meant that the space for national economic policy, that is, the scope for domestic policies, especially in the areas of trade, investment and industrial development, is now often framed by international disciplines, commitments and global market considerations. It is for each Government to evaluate the trade-off between the benefits of accepting international rules and commitments and the constraints posed by the loss of policy space. It is particularly important for developing countries, bearing in mind development goals and objectives, that all countries take into account the need for appropriate balance between national policy space and international disciplines and commitments.

24. We resolve to encourage greater direct investment, including foreign direct investment, in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to support their development activities and to enhance the benefits they can derive from such investments.

25. We further resolve to continue to support efforts by developing countries and countries with economies in transition to create a domestic environment conducive to attracting investments through, inter alia, achieving a transparent, stable and predictable investment climate with proper contract enforcement and respect for property rights and the rule of law and pursuing appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks that encourage business formation.

26. We commit ourselves to promoting and facilitating, as appropriate, access to and the development, transfer and diffusion of technologies, including environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how, to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex I.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

27. We acknowledge the vital role the private sector can play in generating new investments, employment and financing for development.

28. We encourage Governments to continue to pursue the creation of a conducive environment for enterprise development in both rural and urban areas. Particular attention should be given to policies that promote micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and women's participation and entrepreneurship in formal and informal sectors through, inter alia, simplified and improved administrative regimes for the registration of small businesses access to microcredit, social security systems and information on markets and new technology, as well as better regulations. Such policies should contribute to the integration of informal economic activity into the mainstream economy.

29. We stress the importance of promoting corporate responsibility and accountability. We encourage responsible business practices such as those promoted by the Global Compact and call upon the private sector to take into account not only the economic and financial but also the developmental, social, human rights, gender and environmental implications of their undertakings. In this context, we underline the importance of the International Labour Organization tripartite declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy.

30. We call for increased national investment and international development funding and investment flows to developing countries and countries with economies in transition that are targeted to sectors of the economy with greater potential to generate productive employment and decent work for all. Such development funding could include, as appropriate, debt-for-sustainable-development swaps aimed at creating employment and decent work for all, particularly for youth and women.

31. We also acknowledge the important role the public sector can play as an employer and in developing an environment that enables the effective generation of full and productive employment and decent work for all.

32. We underline the important contribution that employment generation can make to post-conflict reconstruction and development. We stress the urgency of generating employment opportunities for men and women whose livelihoods have been destroyed by the impact of conflict or disaster. We call on all international organizations, civil society groups and the private sector to complement national efforts towards employment generation when addressing the impact of such emergencies.

33. We strongly encourage multilateral and bilateral donor and inter-agency cooperation and coordination, in the pursuit of the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all. To this end, we invite all the relevant international organizations, at the request of national Governments and relevant stakeholders, to contribute, through their programmes, policies and activities, to the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in accordance with national development strategies.

34. We request the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies and invite financial institutions to support efforts to mainstream the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in their policies, programmes and activities. In this regard, we invite stakeholders to duly take account of the International Labour Organization decent work country programmes in order to achieve a more coherent and pragmatic United Nations approach to development at the national level on a voluntary basis.

35. We also request the functional and regional commissions to consider how their activities contribute, or could contribute, to the goals of full employment and decent work for all.

36. We also encourage all relevant agencies to collaborate actively in the development of the toolkit to promote decent work that is currently being developed by the International Labour Organization at the request of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

37. We call upon the International Labour Organization to focus on the implementation of commitments regarding the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including those contained in the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit and the World Summit for Social Development, in order to achieve significant progress in both policy and operational programmes, and in this regard we request the International Labour Organization to consider developing time-bound action plans to 2015, in collaboration with all relevant parties, for the achievement of this goal.

38. We commit ourselves to the implementation of the present declaration and invite all relevant actors, including the Bretton Woods institutions and other multilateral banks, to join our efforts in this regard.

39. We decide to keep the implementation of the present declaration under review, including through the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, and underline that the Council should ensure the coordination and coherence of the relevant programmes of United Nations entities.

40. We request the Secretary-General to include, in his annual report on the follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, a review of the progress achieved in 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, at both the policy and the operational levels.

## Appendix II

### High-level round-table dialogues

#### 1. *Creating decent work opportunities with productivity growth*<sup>1</sup>

1. Participants discussed how decent work and productive employment could be made an international and a national goal for development policies, and whether international institutions and national policy-makers were moving towards stronger commitment and action to achieve full employment and decent work. There was a general consensus that decent work is one of the main links between economic and social development and that pursuing economic growth alone was clearly not sufficient for decent work. Globalization was imposing deregulation in labour markets, which did not help alleviate social conditions. Elements of decent work were essential not only for employment, stability, democracy and peace, but also for productivity. There was therefore a need to balance flexibility with social protection in labour markets in order to improve productivity. Decent work was not seen as an impediment to productivity and competitiveness, but as an investment for sustained development. Emphasis was also placed on the need to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship development and the sustained growth of enterprises as the major engine of job creation, and on the importance of good workplace practices and labour relations in stimulating productivity growth.
2. The binding constraints affecting growth and productivity needed to be identified and addressed through effective dialogue. Policy coherence at both national and international levels was crucial in this respect. The ILO and ECOSOC have a significant role to play in promoting policy coherence on decent work by bringing this issue to the attention of countries and international bodies on a regular basis. In particular, decent work should become the central objective of all aspects of economic policy, and precise targets should be established and pursued by all international institutions, including the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO, with respect to both the quantity and quality of employment. Fair globalization required fair rules for international trade and investment, rules that promote respect for international labour standards.

<sup>1</sup> Co-Moderators: Mr. Jose Luis Machinea, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America, and Mr. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive-Director for Employment, ILO; Organizers: ILO, DESA, UNIDO; Panellists: H.E. Mr. Membathisi Mdladlana, Minister of Labour of South Africa, Chairperson, ILO Governing Body; H.E. Mr. Aart-Jan de Geus, Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, the Netherlands; H.E. Ambassador Walter Fust, Director-General for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland; Mr. Marc Blondel, Member of the ILO Governing Body and former General Secretary of *Force Ouvrière*, France; Mr. Daniel Funes de Rioja, Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body and President of the Argentinian Employers' Federation.

## 2. *Meeting the challenge of employment creation in Africa and the least developed countries (LDCs)*<sup>2</sup>

3. In most LDCs, population has grown at a faster pace than employment, resulting in continuing high levels of unemployment and widespread underemployment, especially in the informal economy and agriculture. Some groups are particularly affected, especially women and young people, who account for a large share of the population in most LDCs. The brain drain of young graduates is a serious concern, while millions eke out a living in the informal economy, where they lack protection, security and voice. Child labour remains a persistent problem in many LDCs, with the Asia-Pacific region home to more than 60 per cent of the world's estimated working children in 2004.
4. The scale of the challenge of employment and productivity growth in the LDCs was clearly recognized. All LDCs face extreme and persistent poverty, overall low human development, volatile economic conditions, and a lack of productive employment opportunities. The challenge is to make growth and employment creation – a key element in the reduction of poverty – go hand in hand, while ensuring that the jobs created are decent and provide sufficient income to escape poverty. This calls for a re-orientation of policies towards decent work. The primary responsibility for this rests with the countries themselves, and they should make employment creation a central and explicit goal of macroeconomic and other policies, integrating it fully into the second generation of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) and other development plans. The need to ensure that growth translates into concrete gains for ordinary people was stressed by several participants. Policy needs to ensure that the benefits are shared widely in order to avoid the polarization of wealth.
5. The round table adopted the following conclusions:
  - Employment creation should be an explicit goal of macroeconomic and social policies and employment objectives should be fully embedded in PRSs and other national development plans.
  - Policies to increase productivity in the agricultural sector and to upgrade the informal economy are at the heart of any strategy geared to promoting full and decent employment in LDCs.
  - Employment measures can make an essential contribution to the long-term stabilization and development of countries emerging from conflict and thus should be included at an early stage in reconstruction and peace-building strategies.
  - Partnerships between the ILO, regional institutions (including regional development banks) and the United Nations system should be strengthened to support national capacities for the creation of decent work at the country level. In Africa, these partnerships could play an important role in accelerating the implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou Plan of Action.
  - The lack of sufficient labour statistics is a major constraint on policy-making in LDCs, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Strengthening both human and financial capacity in this field should be a key priority.

<sup>2</sup> Chair: H.E. Mr. Seydou Bouda, Minister of Economy and Development, Burkino Faso; Co-Moderators: Mr Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, Under-Secretary-General of OSAA, and Mr. Anwarul Chowdhury, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of UN-OHRLLS; Organizers: ECA, ESCAP, OSAA, OHRLSS, ILO; Panellists: H.E. Mr. Keat Chhon, Minister of Finance and the Economy, Cambodia; H.E. Ms. Aisha Abdel Hadi, Chair of the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission and Minister of Manpower and Immigration of Egypt; Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of ECA; Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of ESCAP; Mr. Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, President of the African Business Roundtable and Chairperson of the Business Group of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

- ECOSOC should lend its voice to the call by the African private sector for development institutions and donors to engage more in private sector-sponsored projects.
- Further progress in strengthening and empowering intermediary institutions for private sector development is required.

### 3. *Globalization and labour migration*<sup>3</sup>

6. The round table reached a consensus on the following points.

- Demographic changes and increasing disparities in incomes and security across countries mean that international migration is set to increase. The challenge for the international community is to manage migration through international cooperation and ensure respect for the rights of migrant workers, who continue to face major risks of abuse and exploitation, discrimination and poor integration in host societies.
- Selective admission policies in favour of skilled migrants are depriving developing countries of their critical skills while closing the door to their low-skilled migrants. Such policies are not sustainable in the long term, and may lead to increased irregular migration. There should be more legal avenues for migration of all types of labour. Temporary migration programmes covering both skilled and low-skilled migrants have the potential to increase benefits to all countries through the return of skills and remittances while allaying fears of settlement. However, such programmes can be a channel for exploitation of labour where the rights of migrant workers are neglected. Migration should be by choice, and not by necessity; major emphasis must therefore be placed on generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, particularly in countries of origin.
- Realizing the benefits of migration for all requires inclusive management, international cooperation, policy coherence, social dialogue and a rights-based policy agenda rooted in the rule of law. Remittances are private funds and not a substitute for development finance or ODA. The portability of social security entitlements for migrant workers should be guaranteed.
- There is evidence that unilateral policies do not work. The ILO and United Nations Conventions concerning migrant workers provide a solid foundation for migration policy and should be ratified. Even if they are not ratified, there is much scope for advancing their principles through the (non-binding) ILO multilateral framework on labour migration, which has drawn on international instruments and best practices.

<sup>3</sup> Chair: H.E. Mr. Athauda Seneviratne, Minister of Labour Relations and Foreign Employment, Sri Lanka; Co-Moderators: Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General, ILO; and Mr. Brunson McKinley, Director-General, IOM; Organizers: ILO, IOM, UN-HABITAT, UNCTAD, DESA, UNFPA, UNODC; Panellists: H.E. Mr. Murat Basesgioglu, Minister of Employment and Social Security of Turkey; Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD; Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT; Mr. Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity; Ms. Sharan Burrow, Member of the Global Commission on International Migration.

#### 4. ***Innovation at work: National strategies to achieve gender equality in employment***<sup>4</sup>

7. Participants described innovative approaches to achieving gender equality in employment and shared good practice and experience of promoting it at the workplace. Governments were seen as vital players in initiating such innovations. All agreed that discrimination in the labour market and in law, particularly against women, hampered efforts to combat poverty; adversely affected productivity, wealth creation and growth; and increased social costs. A combined approach was hence required, including gender-sensitive employment policies in line with country needs; greater educational opportunities for women; support in balancing family and work responsibilities; chances to participate in decision-making processes; facilitating income generation for women, in particular through entrepreneurship; equal pay for work of equal value; and adequate social protection. This required a partnership between governments, trade unions, employers' organizations, parliamentarians, civil society, women's groups, the private sector and international organizations.
8. Good laws were important, as was the ratification of key instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and ILO Conventions, but effective enforcement was also needed. Some innovative approaches mentioned included Norwegian legislation requiring a minimum percentage of the seats on the boards of private and public companies to be held by women; laws enabling women and men to share responsibility for the care of children; legislation on equal pay for work of equal value; marketing companies' commitment to gender equality by an "equity label"; the provision of opportunities for rural women to sell their products nationally and internationally through informal-formal economy linkages; the provision of microcredit facilities and financial institutions for businesswomen; specific budget lines to assist young women entrepreneurs; the representation of women in the governing structures of trade unions; and promoting more women in trades and technology industries often regarded as male-dominated industries.
9. The discussion also addressed the relevance of cultural, religious and societal norms; the sensitization of more men to gender issues; the inclusion of more women in decision-making positions in enterprises, trade unions and government; and the need for reliable statistics disaggregated by sex and measuring labour force participation at all levels.
10. The round table concluded by recognizing that good practices and success stories of effective country policies and initiatives that have addressed gender discrimination, promoted gender equality and enhanced productive employment, were important for countries in identifying policy approaches to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all.

<sup>4</sup> Chair: Ms. Nicole Ameline, Special Ambassador for social and gender issues in international relations and former Minister for Gender of France; Co-Moderators: Ms. Rachael Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and Ms. Mari Simonen, Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA; Organizers: DESA, UNIFEM, UNFPA, ILO; Panellists: Ms. Anne Kathrine Slungård, Marketing Director, Entra Real Estate and Chair, Statoil Board of Elections of Norway; Ms. Shanti Chadha, Managing Director, Nepal Woman Crafts; Ms. Barbara Byers, Executive Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress and Member of ILO Governing Body; Ms. Awa Wade, Deputy General Secretary, National Union of Educators, Senegal.