

Statement by Ambassador Vicente Vallenilla of Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, at the Coordination Segment of the Substantive Session of 2002 of the Economic and Social Council

New York, July 10 2002

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, let me express our sincere appreciation for your active and engaged stewardship in the work of the Council. We also welcome the valuable efforts of the other distinguished members of the Bureau during the process of informal consultations and in the substantive session of ECOSOC. Likewise, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed and comprehensive report on “Strengthening further the ECOSOC, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfill the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the UN as contained in the IN Millennium Declaration”.

Madam Chairperson,

The Group of 77 and China considers that the strengthening of ECOSOC’s mandate is crucial to international economic development and cooperation, especially in the developing countries. We stand ready to engage in a constructive and rich debate to achieve this goal.

This year we will tackle three major issues, as outlined in the Secretary-General’s report: the integrated and coordinated follow-up to major UN conferences and summits; the strengthening of ECOSOC cooperation with other principal organs and improved oversight and management of its subsidiary machinery; and the proposals for improving the Council’s working methods.

The Group of 77 attaches great importance to all three issues. However, because negotiations on the World Summit for Sustainable Development are still to take place, the Group of 77 and China considers that it would be premature to immediately address the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits. The consideration of this item should take place after the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development is approved. Monterrey was a very significant conference of the United Nations, giving to this body a particular role to play in the follow-up and implementation of the ‘Monterrey Consensus’. We can begin discussion on the follow-up to Monterrey in the General Segment. Therefore, in this year’s Coordination Segment, we would like to concentrate our work on the proposals to improve the Council’s working methods.

Let me nonetheless make a few observations on each item.

I. Integrated and coordinated follow-up to major UN conferences and summits

The Group believes that the integrated, coordinated and holistic follow-up should include all major conferences and summits. ECOSOC in its coordination segment should review crosscutting themes common to major international conferences and summits, such as ‘poverty eradication’. However, although some coordination between the themes of the coordination segment and the high-level segment might be useful, the Group is concerned that the proposal of the back-to-back could result in repetition. We would like to highlight also that there is a linkage between the relevant parts of the Secretary-General’s report pertaining to the specific follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (item 6) and to the work of the functional commissions (item 8). These items should be considered altogether with this issue in the General Segment.

The follow-up of the implementation of the Millennium Development goals is within the competence of the General Assembly. The role of the Council in the follow-up of the Millennium Declaration is to assist the General Assembly in its overall responsibilities.

II. Strengthening of ECOSOC cooperation with other principal organs and improved oversight and management of its subsidiary machinery

We consider this an important item, which involves a number of complex, and sensitive issues that require careful and detailed discussion. The cooperation and consultation among ECOSOC and other principal organs is important. But due to the sensitive nature of these issues and because some of these issues are related to current processes taking place in the General Assembly, the Group would like to address this item at a later stage. As stated earlier we fully support the role of the Council in assisting the General Assembly in its overall responsibilities in the follow-up of the Millennium Development Goals.

III. Improving the Council's working methods

The Group is looking forward to a constructive dialogue on the working methods in this year's coordination segment. We consider that flexibility in scheduling meetings of the Council is very important to allow the international community to address in a flexible and timely manner situations requiring urgent attention. We believe that this flexibility, in particular the ability to schedule additional sessions is already provided under the current rules of procedures.

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, further progress needs to be made to enhance the overall capacity of ECOSOC to meet the demands for policy coherence, comprehensive and multisectorial policy responses based on partnerships and robust international cooperation. We do not believe, however, that this could be achieved by shortening the substantive session of ECOSOC and by reorganizing the humanitarian and the operational activities segment. The current July substantive session does not conflict with any other meeting and it gives to small delegations, most of them members of our Group, the opportunity to attend the entire substantive session. We believe that to increase the reach and impact of the operational activities segment, more country ownership and funding would be crucial.

On the proposals related to the General Segment, we would like to highlight the importance of its oversight function. The General Segment should not be reduced to carry out management functions. ECOSOC has to review each report of its functional commissions, in order to provide clear policy guidance to all of them, particularly to those, which have the primary responsibility for the follow-up and review of the implementation of a major United Nations conference.

Madam Chairperson,

Before concluding my statement, I would like to express the importance the Group attaches to engaging NGOs, the private sector, local authorities, parliamentarians, universities and other non-State actors with the work of the Council. These issues are currently being considered systematically in the General Assembly's Private Partnership Resolution and we believe that we should not duplicate the work taking place in the General Assembly.

We look forward to exploring these issues with your further in the coming days.

Thank you Madam Chairperson.

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