

## UN Economic and Social Council assumes two new major functions

### GA President confirms dates for High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development

*Registration opens for civil society organization*

In a [letter](#) dated 27 July 2007 to all permanent missions to the United Nations in New York, the President of the General Assembly confirmed the 22 and 23 October 2007 as the dates for the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development. The President asked all member states to be presented at the highest possible level during the Dialogue. As of today, the Financing for Development Office and NGLS have opened the application process for participation in the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development (22-23 October 2007), as well as informal interactive hearings with representatives of civil society organizations (11 October 2007). The application form for participation in the Hearings and the High-level Dialogue can be retrieved [online](#).



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### Council holds its first Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and launches the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) in Geneva

In his opening address to the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon highlighted the new initiatives of the Council to reenergize its functions and to rejuvenate its mission. As the two most striking innovations he mentioned the AMR and the DCF.

The AMR was held on 3-4 July 2007 and focused on “Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development”. In this context, it heard an introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the theme of the review, delivered by Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. Mr. Sha highlighted that eradicating poverty and hunger – the overarching objective of the global conferences – was an appropriate theme for this inaugural review. Many countries had already begun to implement national development strategies. Together, all the countries involved must reach agreement on a new set of trading arrangements that set aside narrow commercial and political interests and achieved the agreed goal of establishing a trade regime that actively contributed to development in developing countries.

At the event, Bangladesh, Barbados,

Ethiopia, Ghana, Cambodia and Cape Verde made voluntary presentations on the progress made in implementing their national development strategies towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals and the Millennium Development Goals.

The official launch of the DCF took place on 5 July 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland. The event brought together a wide array of development partners in order to engage in a dialogue on strengthening international development cooperation. In his opening remarks, the UN Secretary-General said that establishing the Development Cooperation Forum was a decisive step forward in the implementation of the global partnership for development. It was proof of the commitment of Governments to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of international development cooperation. The emergence of new and increasingly specialized funds made the system even more complex. Global effort would bear fruit only if all stakeholders – Governments, UN system organizations, civil society, parliaments, private sector and academia – understood that they were accountable to one another.

In its resolution on FfD (E/2007/L.31), ECOSOC requested the President of the Council to initiate consultations with all stakeholders on how to enhance the impact of the 2008 spring meeting of ECOSOC with BWIs, WTO and UNCTAD.

## Social Watch Philippines kicks off civil society review on FfD

By Marivic Raquiza and Nadia Ginete\*

Five years after the United Nations Financing for Development (FfD) Conference held in Monterrey Mexico in 2002, Social Watch Philippines (SWP) once again kicks off the civil society review of the FfD outcomes in the Philippines. Five years ago, SWP led civil society participation in a multi-stakeholder approach convened by the Philippine government, in the crafting of official policy positions on FfD, which also included the business sector. The partnership forged around the FfD conference between and among government, civil society and the business sector was observed by many as a “best practice” in constructive engagement. Today, the civil society review process is anchored on the overriding objectives of mobilizing new and additional resources for the MDGs at the country level, and identifying stumbling blocks as well strategies to overcoming constraints and challenges. Some years ago, a government study pointed out that the cumulative resource gap for all MDG financing from 2007 to 2010 stood at PhP 394.7 B (or 1.2 % of GNP) under high cost assumptions. The study also outlined ways of reducing the shortfall through lower cost interventions and proposed policy measures to increasing budgetary support. The SWP review will take off and build on the results of the study. It will identify ways of increasing revenues while pointing out the need to address existing policies that promote inequities. Innovative government-CSO proposals will also be presented such as changing the debt sustainability concept of the IMF and Paris Club, and mainstreaming a debt-to-MDG conversion for countries outside the HIPC initiative. The FfD CSO review will also look into the critical role of labor migration, particularly the contribution of overseas workers remittances in keeping the

Philippine economy afloat. Finally, the study will point to the centrality of the quality of governance in addressing the FfD challenges faced by the country. The FfD thematic policy papers generated by SWP will be discussed and debated in a national consultation of CSOs. The CSO consultation is scheduled around World Poverty and Hunger Eradication Day (17 October 2007) to commemorate and highlight the FfD aspects of poverty and hunger. The CSO policy positions firmed up during the consultation shall be shared with official policy makers in relation to the FfD process.

## Workshop on “The Road to Doha”

By Eva Hanfstaengl\*

On 29 June 2007, a workshop on “The Road to the International Review Conference on FfD” was held in Geneva in the context of the Civil Society Development Forum in Geneva, organized by CONGO and the Millennium Campaign. The event brought together over 600 participants. Eva Hanfstaengl (NGO Committee on FfD) presented the background of the FfD process. John Foster (North-South Institute) informed about progress of the “Leading Group on Solidarity Levies for Development”. Mr. Foster highlighted that France had launched an airlines levy for drug purchase, joined by a 24 other countries. One of the key innovations was the principle that taxes for global objectives could be initiated nationally, without universal consensus. The Third Plenary meeting of the Group would be held in Seoul in September 2007. NGO networks were currently seeking a champion country to initiate a pilot currency transaction tax. Philo Morris (NGO Committee on FfD) highlighted the options for NGOs to fully engage in the FfD process. She also mentioned that in preparation of the High-level Dialogue on FfD, the GA will hold the

2008 spring meeting of ECOSOC with BWIs, WTO and UNCTAD and the Development Cooperation Forum (July 2008). Kinda Mohammedieh (Arab NGO Network for Development) reported on the debate on the “Financing Development to achieve the MDGs” that took place in Doha, Qatar on 17-18 June. Ms. Jean Saldanha (CIDSE) highlighted important topics for the Doha agenda, including, a fair, comprehensive and transparent procedure to negotiate debt cancellation and international cooperation against tax evasion and capital flight, as well as the establishment of a world tax organization. Finally, the following recommendations were made and presented to ECOSOC:

1. The Doha Conference should be at the Summit level, have a full preparatory process including periodic meetings of a preparatory committee and an outcome document.
2. Debt cancellation and humanitarian relief must not be included in the definition of ODA. The Millennium Development Goals should be instrumental in debt sustainability criteria.
3. International support should be given for further pilot projects in innovative financing, in particular the currency transaction tax to finance development objectives.
4. Progressive national tax systems should be developed to redistribute wealth and resist tax competition. Tax havens must be closed and tax evasion eliminated.
5. The reform of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) must incorporate representative voice and vote of the global South. ECOSOC should be strengthened, in particular, its role in establishing accountability and coordination of the IFIs.
6. A “Forum on FfD” should be established involving active engagement of Development and Finance ministries, key multilateral institutions, NGOs and the private sector.

\*External contributions are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Secretariat.

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