

**ECESA Meeting of Deputies
22 July 2010**

8:30-10:30 a.m., New York time

Conclusions and Decisions

- Deputies agreed to two specific follow-up actions to the item on collaborative ECESA action on youth issues:
 - (i) to launch a joint initiative on data collection and analysis: The Social Development Cluster will identify areas for such initiatives.
 - (ii) to create a working group to develop specific proposals for joint research, which should include (a) producing studies on youth-related development challenges, particularly in the fields of employment and youth political and civil participation. EC-ESA institutes will be invited to initiate/contribute to such studies. (b) development of guidelines on how to engage youth, akin to the UNDG guidelines on indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.
- UNEP will circulate to Deputies for information the strategy and list of planned activities prepared by its TUNZA Youth Advisory Council.
- UNCTAD will look into developing a short brief based upon its Trade and Development Report 2010, focused on employment, that would be specific to the situation of youth.
- Deputies agreed that DESA will create an e-room, to be managed by the ECESA Secretariat, for the ECESA exercise on scanning major trends and emerging issues in development.
- Deputies agreed to send the latest calendars of their organizations to the ECESA Secretary, in order to keep the calendar of activities on the ECESA website up to date.

Summary of Discussion

The Chairperson, Mr. Thomas Stelzer, ASG of DESA, thanked participants for joining the ECESA Meeting of Deputies and introduced the two agenda items: (i) collaborative ECESA action on youth issues, and (ii) identifying major trends and emerging issues in the area of development.

1. Collaborative ECESA action on Youth issues

Mr. Stelzer provided background on the UN and youth issues as well as on emerging issues relevant to youth development. Over the last decade or so, recognition had grown that youth hold a key to advancing development, as well as building peaceful and vibrant societies. They should be encouraged and enabled to participate in all aspects of society. To this end, the General Assembly had developed and adopted a comprehensive World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), which identified 15 priority areas for action.

The global financial and economic crisis had exacerbated already high rates of youth unemployment and informal labour. Young people living in poverty without access to basic education and health services were also more exposed to the risks of violent crimes. Yet, the potential of young people to bring about a positive change within and with other societies is also increasingly recognized.

The Assembly adopted a resolution to proclaiming the International Year of Youth. The intent of the resolution's sponsors and supporters was to catalyze the scaling up of the youth-focused activities. On International Youth Day (12 August), the UN would launch the International Year of Youth, with the theme "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding". As a highlight of the Year, Member States had also decided to hold a UN conference, with the aim of generating a more action-oriented framework for advancing the youth agenda, building on the existing programme (WPAY).

Mr. Stelzer reported that, while Member States were engaged in ongoing consultations on the modalities of the conference, the UN system was already geared up. He urged ECESA to play a lead role in the Year's activities, including the conference, and called Deputies' attention to the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, which convened at the working level every 4-6 weeks, to share information and ideas and to coordinate youth-focused efforts. The Network had adopted a Framework Approach for the International Year which identified three key objectives: (i) Create Awareness: increase commitment and investment in youth; (ii) Mobilize and Engage: increase youth participation and partnerships; and (iii) Connect and Build Bridges: increase intercultural understanding among youth. The Network includes members from over 20 UN entities. ECESA could suggest ways to further strengthen the mechanism.

Mr. Stelzer also recalled the decision of ECESA Principals to charge Deputies, in particular, to identify areas for joint and/or coordinated analytical work on youth issues, including youth employment. There were important knowledge gaps due to a lack of data and analysis on youth. Deputies could consider how the Social Development Cluster of ECESA may be useful in that regard. Deputies could also consider the potential of ECESA research institutes

to produce studies on youth-related development challenges, particularly in the fields of employment and youth political and civil participation.

Principals had also asked the Deputies to explore launching joint initiatives on Youth. With the new tranche of funding available soon through the Development Account, ECESA members could consider seizing the opportunity to implement joint programming on key issues related to youth development. Data collection remained a major challenge in addressing youth issues. Deputies could explore possibilities for joint work in improving data collection: what kind of joint initiatives can be launched; and how to fund such initiatives.

UNHABITAT discussed the importance it places on youth development and that it considers youth as both key beneficiaries and key stakeholders. Through its Youth Empowerment Programme, UNHABITAT aimed to empower youth by providing vocational skills training. It also operated a Trust Fund for youth-led development and had recently launched its publication, “State of the World’s Urban Youth: Leveling the playing field”. UNHABITAT stated that it was very active in the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and acknowledged the important work of the UN Programme on Youth (UNPY/DESA) in chairing the Network. Recognizing that more could be done to support country-level efforts, UNHABITAT proposed the development of guidelines on how to engage youth, perhaps to be produced by UNDG, as in the cases of indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.

UNEP mentioned its global programme on youth called TUNZA, which engaged youth around the world. This programme could be a tool to be used throughout the International Year of Youth; perhaps through activities related to the environment, as most of the programme’s work related to environmental protection. TUNZA had created a roadmap for the Year under 5 key areas of engagement: (i) promote youth interactions through the Unite for Climate website; (ii) identify 6 key days during the Year for advocacy purposes; (iii) reinforce regional collaboration; (iv) engage in youth conferences, workshops, seminars, etc.; and (v) collaboration in the spirit of One UN.

The TUNZA Youth Advisory Council would organize activities on 12 August to launch the Year. UNEP offered to circulate the list of planned activities and its strategy. As UNEP worked regularly and successfully with DPI, it was suggested that they may be a useful partner in raising awareness on activities related to the Year.

UNCTAD stated that, in September, it would launch its *Trade and Development Report 2010*, with employment as its main theme. The report would show that some countries had the highest unemployment rate in over 40 years, most of which were countries with high youth populations. UNCTAD would look into developing a short brief based upon the report that would be specific to the situation of youth.

UNDP stressed the importance of sustaining the distinction between young men and young women, as they experienced challenges in a different context. UNDP suggested that ECESA take the current opportunity to establish a system of monitoring modules and data collection techniques that would be employed over the next 5 to 10 years in surveys and censuses. Also, UNDP suggested setting up a small working group to brainstorm on joint activities, including related to research, for the Year.

DESA informed Deputies of its work on global data on young migrants. Much had been done since the adoption of the WPAY: for example, work to disaggregate data on migration by age (available on DESA website) and also within refugee populations by age (available on UNHCR website). Since the WPAY, the UN had also undertaken surveys of both destination countries and countries of origin on the matter of remittances. UNICEF was partly supporting this work and the Population Division would welcome additional funding, such as through the Development Account.

ESCWA stated that data collection was a key point in the region. Youth with special needs, such as IDPs, were of particular importance and should be considered in ECESA's deliberations on youth.

DESA mentioned that it is preparing for the Rio+20 Conference in the context of the Commission for Sustainable Development. The Commission had consistently had a high rate of participation of youth, a Major Group, and the same was expected in the Rio+20 process. There were likely to be many opportunities to link with the International Year of Youth and these should be addressed.

DESA recently participated in a counter-terrorism task force meeting where members acknowledged the importance of including a development perspective in their work, without making causal links between, for example, poverty or under-development and terrorism. The task force was convinced that addressing youth was a key strategy and were open to learning more from the vast knowledge available from ECESA members. Regarding the Development Account, the DESA confirmed that the 8th tranche of funds will be available soon and recalled the focus of the Account on funding capacity building activities.

UNHABITAT mentioned the important role youth can play in tackling the issue of violence and crime in urban settings.

OHRLLS informed Deputies that youth represented 60 per cent of the population in LDCs. The positive empowerment of youth was critical to development, but questions remained on how to effectively undertake efforts.

Deputies agreed to two specific follow-up actions: (i) to launch a joint initiative on data collection and analysis; and (ii) to create a working group to develop specific proposals for joint research.

2. Identifying major trends and emerging issues in the area of development

Mr. Stelzer briefed Deputies on the proposal by DESA to initiate a broad process of consultations and brainstorming for identifying major trends and emerging issues in the area of development. There were two main objectives: (i) helping to define strategic priorities for the work of the UN in the coming year; and (ii) scanning the environment and scouting for issues that may gain urgency or prominence in the next 2-3 years. The exercise would provide ECESA with the necessary knowledge to advise the Secretary-General about his priorities and also to flag issues for Member States through our analytical work and the various intergovernmental processes ECESA entities support.

He suggested that all members of EC-ESA should engage in the exercise. It could be held every year via email and web-based discussions, and/or video links, from September through October. The final recommendations could be submitted to Principals for their consideration and approval. The discussions should not focus on forthcoming summits/conferences, as those were priorities already defined by Member States. The aim was to create a shared space and momentum for focusing on emerging issues, not events.

DESA pointed to three factors: (1) limits on economic growth, in terms of climate change, bio-diversity and natural resources; (2) past periods of rapid growth in developing countries; and (3) the fissuring of the international cooperation needed to reconcile these two trends. The three could be subsumed together under the “political economy of global sustainable development” as a key emerging issue.

DESA added that, in terms of achieving a fairer and more sustainable global development as the key challenge of the next two to three decades, this would require profound economic and social transformations. Failure to bring about such transformations would only create further stresses (e.g. by affecting migration patterns and putting further strain on natural resources). It was noted that HLCP was thinking along the same lines: on how to move beyond the nine joint crisis initiatives to identify steps in the next decades to unify the UN’s work and influence national policy-making and action. This also linked to thinking about the post-2015 development framework.

UNHABITAT agreed on the need to move beyond business as usual and the sectoral approach. This was even more evident at the country level, where the UN was at risk of becoming less relevant than the various other development actors. Bold action was needed to address the new challenges, such as through innovative financing approaches and other efforts to engage the private sector in new business models, going beyond corporate social responsibility.

OHCHR strongly welcomed the initiative and underscored the contribution of a human rights perspective to the analysis of challenges and the promotion of sustainable approaches to development. It recommended putting in place a process to keep ECESA entities connected in their thinking on these issues and to facilitate entities’ contributions.

DESA observed how the two previous interventions had highlighted the issue of information and development, whether monitoring and data, ‘disclosure’ (e.g. in the context of corporate responsibility), ‘prior and informed consent’ (e.g. in the context of biodiversity and indigenous

issues), transparency or verification. Perhaps a global policy community could be established around the issue to raise awareness of the contributions of information approaches to development so far and explore how to build on them.

OSAA underscored the opportunity for ECESA in the next several years to help advance the empowerment of women as a crucial issue cutting across the entire development and MDG agendas, by devising strategies and programmes to move from rhetoric to action.

UNDP looked forward to engaging in the process and identified two key issues: (1) energy and development, with different implications for women and men; and (2) the role of science and technology in achieving the MDGs. Existing research by the UN system on the first issue was disparate and not sufficiently focused on the long-term challenges of energy sovereignty and security over the next 10-20 years.

DESA informed that the 2011 *World Economic and Social Survey* (WESS) would focus on what it takes to 'green' an economy, and would include attention to requirements in terms of science and technology, as well as human resource capacity and education. It would build on the 2009 WESS, which focused an investment-led approach in renewable energy as a way to pursue a low-carbon high-growth development path.

UNHABITAT noted the ambiguity of the 'green economy' concept and suggested a role for ECESA in better defining it.

OHRLLS agreed with the emphasis by UNDP on energy and development and how energy access would affect development strategies and paths, particularly for countries with special needs. It also supported a focus on science and technology, including different mechanisms at national, regional and global levels for transfer of an array of technologies critical for development.

UNEP suggested that the scanning exercise would benefit from a coordinated working group, though which ideas would be exchanged over the next few months before presentation to principals. DESA was the correct place to coordinate the inputs. UNEP suggested in particular that an internet-managed working group be established to pose questions, seek inputs and develop specific proposals. The ideas should be more long-term and strategic in nature than immediate.

OSAA highlighted migration and employment generation. While DESA had done much work on migration, there was a need to think about the issue within ECESA in a more structured way, given the significant consequences for the UN development agenda. And while DESA and others had done work on employment, the jobs crisis remained a major threat to stability. ECESA could focus on how to advance the employment agenda, especially in developing countries. OHRLLS supported both proposals.

UNCTAD supported a number of the issues already raised, including technology transfer. It informed Deputies that its 2010 *Least Developed Countries Report*, to be released in November would show that LDCs are generally off-track in progress towards the MDGs, reinforcing the idea that business as usual is no longer an option. ECESA could help identify new development paths, with links to addressing the challenges of climate change and energy. The

multiple crises had highlighted the need for new ways to develop and to create productive capacity. The best chance for developing countries would be to make the transition to a low-carbon economy. This was the focus of UNCTAD's *World Investment Report 2010*, launched earlier that day. UNCTAD also stressed the need to ensure that the 'green economy' concept was not seen as a Trojan horse for 'green protectionism' – and hence damaging for developing countries.

OHCHR strongly supported attention to the issue of migration, also a major priority for the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the years ahead.

UNHABITAT encouraged consideration of both international and internal migration, given, for example, the linkages with disasters, natural resources and security issues, as well as urbanization.

DESA expressed appreciation to Deputies for their encouraging responses to the proposed scanning exercise. Certain priorities were already defined by Member States, such as LDCs and 2011 conference, and sustainable development, including attention to green economy as a major theme in the preparations for the Rio+20 conference. The aim of the ECESA exercise was to scan the global environment and scout for development trends and emerging issues that may gain urgency or prominence in the next 2-3 years, in a very forward-looking manner. Every fall, the Secretary-General seeks the advice of the USG of DESA on development priorities for the next year. The exercise would enable ECESA recommendations in this regard. Moreover, it would enable ECESA to advise Member States and the UN system/CEB on issues potentially on the horizon and to focus its own coordination and collaboration accordingly in the near and medium terms.

Mr. Stelzer underscored the appreciation to Deputies and indicated that DESA would create an e-room for the scanning exercise, to be managed by the ECESA Secretariat.

3. Other matters

Keeping the ECESA calendar up to date

Mr. Stelzer requested all members of ECESA to help update the calendar of activities on the ECESA website by sending the latest calendar of their organizations to the ECESA Secretary.

LDC-IV Conference, Istanbul, May-June 2011

OHRLLS informed Deputies that the preparations for the conference are in full swing, with national and regional reviews completed and the global review in process. There would be a number of pre-conference events on different thematic issues. OHRLLS would call on ECESA members to help organize and participate in these events, including by carrying out special studies in their respective areas. The conference process was a major opportunity for ECESA and the UN system to reflect on the past 10 years of the LDCs programme and set a course for the next 10.

Africa and new strategic partners

OSAA informed Deputies of its ongoing work on Africa and its new strategic partners, such as Brazil and China. An expert group meeting had been held in Addis Ababa in 2009,

generating inputs for a study to be launched in September. OSAA looked forward to engaging ECESA in more work on this subject to assess the situation and implications.

Comings and goings

Mr. Stelzer congratulated Ms. Theresa Chu of DESA's Communications and Information Management Service on her retirement from the United Nations after 37 years of service and expressed appreciation to her on behalf of all ECESA for her support to the Committee, especially its videoconferencing, over the past 10 years. Ms. Chu thanked her fellow technicians, particularly UNOG colleagues, for their collaboration and support.

Mr. Stelzer recalled the recent announcement by USG Sha regarding the changes in the post of ECESA Secretary. Mr. Stelzer thanked Mr. Donald Lee for his outstanding support to the Committee as ECESA Secretary and to him personally as Chair of the Deputies network, and congratulated Mr. Lee on his promotion to Chief of the Social Perspective on Development Branch in the DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development. Mr. Stelzer asked Deputies to join him in welcoming Mr. Navid Hanif, Head of DESA's Strategic Planning Unit, who would assume the post of ECESA Secretary as of 1 August.