



Chief Executives Board for Coordination

1 June 2005

Original: English

Conclusions of the Chief Executives Board at its first regular session of 2005

(Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland, 9 April 2005)

Introduction

1. The first regular session of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2005 was scheduled to be convened at the headquarters of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva, at the invitation of the Director-General, on 8 April. It was to be followed by an executive heads retreat at Mont Pèlerin on 9 April. In view of the timing of the funeral of Pope John Paul II, which the Secretary-General and a number of executive heads attended on the morning of 8 April in Rome, the programme for the CEB meetings was adjusted and accommodated within one day at Mont Pèlerin.

2. The executive heads expressed their appreciation to Juan Somavía, the Director-General of ILO, for the efforts that he and his colleagues had invested in arranging the CEB session and regretted that circumstances had prevented them from availing themselves of ILO hospitality on that occasion.

3. In his letter of 8 March 2005, the Secretary-General had proposed that the single theme for the CEB session and its subsequent retreat be the system's approach to the 2005 World Summit to be held in September during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and what outcome of the Summit would best advance the causes of collective security and development, as well as the interests of the multilateral system. He had thus suggested that, following an initial review of relevant documentation before the session, there should be a first tour de table at the regular session on how different organizations in the system saw their role in contributing to the success of the 2005 World Summit and perceived the main issues before it. This would, in turn, serve to identify the most relevant topics to be pursued in this regard at the retreat.

4. In view of the shortened programme, the Secretary-General proposed that, following a tour d'horizon of current political and other developments that participants may wish to raise, the discussions focus on preparations for the September Summit and on how the system should position itself vis-à-vis the 2005 World Summit. He proposed that the discussion integrate issues related to those which would be taken up at the CEB regular session, including the latest draft of a forthcoming CEB report entitled "One United Nations — catalyst for progress and change: how the Millennium Declaration is changing the way the system works",

which was being prepared within High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), and the Committee's recommendations relating to United Nations system support for Africa and the development of a system-wide strategy for conflict prevention.

5. On behalf of CEB the Secretary-General welcomed Edouard Dayan, Director-General of the Universal Postal Union, who was participating in CEB for the first time.

A. Follow-up to the Millennium Declaration

6. The Secretary-General, in his introductory remarks, noted that his report to the Summit entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005) proposed a set of interlinked policy decisions for action by Heads of State at the Summit covering comprehensively development, security, human rights, and the rule of law. The report also covered reforms to be introduced within the United Nations, including reform of intergovernmental machinery management of the Secretariat, geared to qualitatively enhance the Organization's capacity to advance policy goals in those interrelated areas with equal effectiveness. In the same perspective, the report addressed measures to enhance system-wide coherence and effectiveness.

7. The Secretary-General stressed the special importance he attached to the proposals set forth in his report being reviewed in a holistic, comprehensive way. He also emphasized the need for institutional change to be deep and wide-ranging, so as to equip the international community with instruments of multilateralism that are responsive to current requirements and equal to the challenges ahead. This should include reform of the Security Council to reflect present world realities; reform of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to enhance their relevance to the issues of the day; reform of the Commission on Human Rights to give the work of the United Nations in this area the necessary professionalism and credibility; and the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission, with responsibilities of special relevance to priority concerns shared by the whole system.

8. The Secretary-General said that he was very encouraged by the strong support he sensed among world leaders for reform, and in the first instance, by a deepening consensus within the international community that there would be no sustained development without security, that there would be no security without development, and that neither would be realized without respect for human rights. He added that the reform agenda was now engaging capitals and that high-level envoys — the former President of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo, the former President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, and the former Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Ireland and Indonesia, Dermot Ahearn and Ali Alatas respectively — were now actively engaged in advocating for the reform agenda set out in the report.

9. Guidelines on the use of force, measures to genuinely enhance nuclear security, clear definitions of terrorism and of the "right to protect" around which all can rally, renewed commitments to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and decisive action to effectively implement all components of the Monterrey Consensus and of the human rights agenda, must — the Secretary-General stressed — come together at the 2005 World Summit as a renewed compact for human progress.

10. Turning to the increasing scrutiny to which the United Nations system organizations were being subjected, he noted that in the public mind, there was only one United Nations. Successes and shortcomings in different parts of the system all reflected on each other. The strengthening of management and transparency should be forcefully pursued as a common system-wide commitment. Sometimes, he said, it takes crisis situations to bring about the change and genuine reform that are necessary for real progress.

11. The Chairman of the High-Level Committee on Programmes then briefed the executive heads on the work of HLCP, focusing on three issues that were especially relevant to the CEB agenda under consideration. The first related to the draft of a report that HLCP proposed be issued in May or June 2006 by CEB, entitled “One United Nations — catalyst for progress and change”. He emphasized that the draft, while still representing work in progress, was the product of a truly joint effort by the entire system. It covered all three parts of the Millennium Declaration: development, human rights, and security and conflict prevention. The main purpose of the report was to illustrate how the United Nations system had responded to the Millennium Declaration and the many ways in which the follow-up to the Declaration was contributing to greater coherence and effectiveness in the system’s work. The report started by highlighting the current challenges being faced by the system and went on to give concrete examples of not only accomplishments but also of the great potential that working together as a unified system offered for greater impact and for demonstrating the unique value of the multilateral system. The report advocated stronger links between the normative and the operational work of the system and stressed the system’s commitment to strengthen management and accountability as a means of maximizing the system’s effectiveness both in addressing global challenges and in responding to specific country needs. The process of preparing the report had proved extremely useful in itself and was contributing to an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence, which is essential for sustaining progress. The Chairman drew attention, in particular, to the concluding chapter of the draft entitled “The way ahead for the system” and noted that the outcome of the present discussions would be especially relevant to its finalization.

12. Turning to other aspects of its work, the Chairman noted that the Committee’s approaches to much of that work were being guided by the same basic premise that had oriented the Secretary-General’s report for the 2005 World Summit — the imperative to view development, security and human rights both in their own right and as mutually reinforcing components of the system’s overriding mission to advance human progress. Benefiting from an increasingly close and fruitful collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Committee had continued, in this perspective, to consider strategies that would serve to advance an integrated approach by the system to the issue of conflict prevention. Three basic objectives had emerged, which were elaborated in the documentation before CEB: strengthening the system’s capacity to mobilize and harmonize the actions of the whole range of actors whose engagement could serve to enhance conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts; responding more strategically to the economic dimensions of conflict; and bringing additional capacity to bear on analysing and addressing potential threats emanating from environmental degradation or resource scarcity. Across these considerations, ensuring timely, early action will be enhanced by pooling the system’s knowledge

and achieving a deeper understanding of potential conflict situations and their underlying factors.

13. Introducing the documentation on the system's support for Africa's development, the Chairman highlighted the compelling challenges of mobilizing adequate resources to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. As the Secretary-General reiterated in his report for the 2005 World Summit, the attainment of the 0.7 per cent official development goal was crucial. The system's advocacy for substantially increased resource flows for African development should be accompanied by a major concerted effort to help build and strengthen national and regional institutions and managerial and technical capacities in the continent. The system's effort in support of NEPAD should be sustained and proactive, while remaining sensitive to Africa's ownership of the programme.

14. In the ensuing discussion, deep appreciation was expressed for the leadership of the Secretary-General, and strong support was voiced for the thrust of his report to the 2005 World Summit, especially the report's call for a comprehensive response that would address in a balanced way development, security and human rights and their interlinkages. The crucial importance for the whole system of a successful outcome of the Summit was emphasized. Executive heads committed to engage their governing bodies and to use all available occasions between now and September to help galvanize support for the Summit's success. It was suggested that the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG), the inter-agency network of communications officers of the United Nations system, should, in the period ahead, focus on ways to project the Secretary-General's report and the goals of the Summit so as to maximize support from stakeholders in Government and civil society.

15. The following were among the issues raised:

- It is crucially important to effectively engage civil society not only in the run-up to the 2005 World Summit but also in the Summit itself, and in charting, monitoring and contributing to the implementation of the Summit's outcome.
- There is, in the same context, a compelling need for an effective communications strategy that would serve to bring out the relevance to people's aspirations for a better future of the reforms that will be before the 2005 World Summit for decision. It is imperative, in that perspective, that the Summit's outcome be and be perceived to be not only comprehensive and balanced, effectively encompassing all of the key dimensions highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, but also fundamentally equitable.
- The system must — and the Summit should help the system — respond to scrutiny from all quarters. In this regard, genuine democracy, openness, fairness and equity should remain the fundamental objectives that the system stands for and should demonstrate its determination and capacity to advance.
- The three pillars on which the Secretary-General's report is based — development; the rule of law and human rights; and security — must be pursued in their own right and in their linkages.

- An important contribution of the Secretary-General's report is to advance a holistic treatment of development strategies by linking trade, aid, investment and governance.
- There is an increasing disconnect between growth and employment that the system needs to help correct as a condition to effectively advance the fight against poverty. Combating poverty, generating jobs and advancing governance should be pursued as essential, intimately related components of the system's development effort.
- Fighting crime, violence and corruption are not only key elements of the system's governance agenda, but should also be pursued as an integral part of the system's development agenda.
- The effort to enhance the system's coherence in its approaches to trade, finance and technology must proceed from a keen awareness of the impact of globalization in shifting the locus of decision-making on economic matters and take into account countries' call for "policy space" in setting their development path.
- As emphasized in the Secretary-General's report, the needs of middle-income developing countries, the impact of growing inequalities and more effective governance at the national and international levels are critical issues that must continue to be an integral part of the development agenda to be pursued by the system and advanced at the Summit.
- A genuinely development-oriented, successful completion of the trade round by 2006, overcoming not only North-South but also South-South divides, is critical to progress. The 2005 World Summit in the General Assembly is a very timely occasion to give impetus to the negotiating process towards this goal.
- At the same time it must be recognized that advancing the trade and poverty and trade and development agendas will depend on not only global trade, but also on trade-related developments at the regional and subregional levels. The issue of commodities should also be given a higher place in the international agenda.
- Advancing the Monterrey Consensus should be a crucial objective of the 2005 World Summit. The ingredients for progress — advances in trade and aid and strengthening country leadership and investments, with a particular focus on Africa — are well established. While there is positive movement in a number of areas covered by the Monterrey Consensus, some fundamental changes in direction are imperative in a global situation where the savings of the South finance consumer demands in the North, rather than consumption and investment in developing countries.
- Tying the concept of sustainability to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and emphasizing a long-term, 10-year framework for this purpose are valid concepts that should be pursued with determination, but with a degree of flexibility, particularly as to financing modalities, and without diverting attention from immediate, short-term requirements and interventions.
- Models of economic growth should not be identified by their most extreme manifestations but should be assessed in relation to the way in which they have been applied in practice. Under different models, a responsible fiscal policy is

necessary for growth, income distribution, social development and poverty alleviation.

- While there are gaps in international economic governance that constrain the possibility of genuine prioritization, the system can help fill at least some of those gaps by improving the coherence of the advice it provides to countries in designing their development paths. At the intergovernmental level, a strengthening of the role of the Economic and Social Council along the lines indicated in the Secretary-General's report could contribute significantly to progress in this respect. In that perspective, links between the Economic and Social Council and the work of not only the Security Council but also of the new proposed Human Rights Council should be encouraged.
- The United Nations Development Week, from 27 June to 1 July 2005, encompassing the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, and the high-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council, will provide precious opportunities for the development community and the United Nations system to contribute collectively to a significant outcome for the Summit. Those events will in turn build on the outcomes of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, in areas ranging from social development, population and the advancement of women to sustainable development, all of which have brought forward key elements of the United Nations development agenda emanating from the global conferences that should be advanced at the 2005 World Summit. Other forums within and outside the system are pursuing important elements of consensus and progress in key areas of trade and aid, including enhanced flow of official development assistance and aid harmonization, that should coalesce in a mutually reinforcing way at the Summit.
- The information revolution is opening new avenues of progress that the system should purposefully seize. Mutual reinforcement between the 2005 World Summit of the General Assembly and the World Summit on the Information Society in November should be sought.
- A paradigm shift is under way, encompassing renewed attention to environmental investments and the untapped potential of South-South cooperation, that the system needs to be both more conscious of and more responsive to.
- The articulation of human rights with the development and the peace and security "pillars" remains unfinished and needs to be advanced at the 2005 World Summit, with the active support of the system. The normative framework in this area is extensive, but its implementation and the Secretariat's capacity to operationalize it are lagging behind.
- The proposed Peacebuilding Commission would provide a most useful platform for the organizations of the system, within their respective mandates and intergovernmental directives, to maximize their contribution to the process of establishing peace in countries in conflict and setting up frameworks conducive to its sustainability.
- The system's contribution not only in the areas of environment and development, but also in relation to security and the rule of law, cannot be prescinded from the specialized work of the technical agencies in fields

ranging from maritime transport to civil aviation. A deliberate effort is under way in these agencies to cast their contribution within the overall policy framework to be addressed at the 2005 World Summit.

- The system's response to the Indian Ocean tsunami points to the central role that the system can play in countering global threats. It also shows how much more effective the system can be when United Nations organizations genuinely join forces, extending their reach to prevention as well as recovery. The provision of support to the establishment of effective early warning systems should be approached as a priority task by all concerned United Nations organizations.
- Advancing system-wide coherence requires not only an intensification and deepening of the policy dialogue but also clear collaborative programmes, such as the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to least developed countries, backed up by sound common strategies and adequate financial support.
- Effective reforms in the functioning of the system — from the way the system should relate to programme countries, simplifying processes and building self-reliance, to the way United Nations organizations should relate to each other, overcoming inter-institutional rivalries and competition — require fundamental changes in the system's culture and mindset. Those changes should be a central component of the reform process.
- A better alignment and greater simplification of the approaches and procedures that guide the system's operational activities, in line with the broader aid harmonization agenda developed at the High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Paris in March 2005, should be actively pursued as an integral part of the reforms advocated in the Secretary-General's report to enhance system-wide coherence and impact. Both the image and the effectiveness of the system are at stake. There are some success stories in this respect, for example the organization of technical cooperation to fight HIV/AIDS, that should be drawn upon and replicated.
- Greater system-wide coherence at the country level, encompassing a qualitative strengthening of the resident coordinator function, should be supported by an inclusive decision-making process at the inter-agency level and by enhanced coordination of national positions in the governing bodies of United Nations organizations.
- The posture of the system should, without being defensive, include a strong commitment to enhance efficiency and accountability, and, in the first instance, demonstrate a clear determination to identify and correct abuses whenever they occur (see para. 19 (a) below).
- Advancing the status of women in United Nations organizations is another key area where the system's credibility is at stake and where much greater progress needs to be made.

16. Participants expressed appreciation for the HLCP initiative to prepare the "One United Nations" report. They welcomed the general thrust of the draft which, while emphasizing accountability, avoided a narrow, administrative approach. A suggestion was made on streamlining the draft and on ways to relate it to the

Secretary-General's report for the 2005 World Summit. It was suggested that "knowledge management" should figure prominently as a main theme of the report.

17. CEB took note of the report and endorsed its conclusions and recommendations (see annex). CEB noted with appreciation that the Committee, under the leadership of Lennart Båge, is addressing themes that are crucial to the future of the system with increasing depth and is thus becoming an indispensable agent of policy development and policy coherence for the system as a whole.

B. Other matters

Management issues

18. The Chairman of HLCM, Catherine Bertini, briefed the executive heads on the outcome of the last meeting of the Committee held earlier in the week (5 and 6 April) in Geneva. She highlighted the following:

(a) The Committee had agreed to address collectively issues of accountability and transparency by, in the first instance, sharing best practices and progressive programmes existing in the system, so as to assist individual organizations in reviewing and improving their mechanisms and by building on each other's experience. The Chairman will also oversee the preparation of a compendium of practices in agencies with regard to the handling of audit reports. In general, internal audit reports were shared with external auditors, who, where appropriate or necessary, reflected relevant findings in their own reports, which were in the public domain. In this regard, some expressed concern that making internal audit reports public would diminish their value as management tools;

(b) The organizations of the system are spending collectively \$850 million annually on information and communication technology (ICT), of which \$650 million is part of their central budgets. A comprehensive exercise is under way, under the aegis of HLCM, to achieve greater harmonization and standardization in this area, in the framework of a system-wide ICT strategy. The effort should be coordinated closely with HLCP, so that the results serve to advance the system's policy agenda and bring greater effectiveness not only in management but also in programme delivery. A joint retreat-style meeting of the two high-level committees was being considered to ensure that ICT policy development effectively serves the requirements of the whole system;

(c) On the broader reform agenda, the Chairman raised two issues:

(i) The General Assembly had deferred, for a second time, consideration of the report of the High-level Review Panel on the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). The reform of ICSC was an essential part of the reform agenda and the Committee recommended that the executive heads take up the issue with their governing bodies so that Member States could send back a positive message on ICSC reform to their representatives at the General Assembly;

(ii) While acting on a proposed formula for cost-sharing of the 2006-2007 security budget, the Committee reiterated its position that security arrangements should be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations.

19. The Executive Heads expressed appreciation to the Chairman of the Committee for her presentation and endorsed its recommendations.

Date and venue for future CEB sessions

20. CEB confirmed that:

(a) The fall 2005 session of CEB would be convened in New York, at United Nations Headquarters, on 28 and 29 October;

(b) The spring 2006 session would be convened at the headquarters of the United Nations World Tourism Organization in Madrid, on 7 and 8 April, at the invitation of its Secretary-General, Francesco Friangialli;

(c) The spring 2007 session will be convened at ILO headquarters in Geneva, at the invitation of its Director-General, Juan Somavía, on dates to be decided upon through further consultations.

21. CEB paid tribute to James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank; Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund; Ruud Lubbers, former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and Catherine Bertini, Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management; whose terms of office had expired or would expire prior to the next meeting of CEB.

Annex

Excerpts from the report of the ninth session of the High-Level Committee on Programmes

Conclusions and recommendations

NEPAD

[...]

21. [...], the Committee concluded that:

- The integration of the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) into the national development frameworks of African countries is vitally important to the long-term sustainability of NEPAD. It is also essential to enabling the system to align its development support activities, particularly its activities to assist countries advance in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, behind well-rooted, broadly owned national development strategies consistent with NEPAD.
- In continuing to support the implementation of commitments on NEPAD at the regional, subregional and country levels, the United Nations system should make a deliberate effort to contribute to measures to enhance policy and operational coherence, including through more systematic communications and information sharing.
- The United Nations system should strengthen its technical support to the NEPAD secretariat, particularly in the performance of its roles of "facilitation" and resource mobilization for the implementation of NEPAD programmes.
- As implementation of NEPAD progresses, there is a need for the United Nations system organizations to channel more technical and financial resources for building institutional, managerial and technical capacity, both to promote domestic resource mobilization and to attract a higher level of foreign direct investments. The funding of joint projects in this and related areas of capacity-building will require a special effort by the system at resource mobilization.

22. The Committee decided to transmit its views to the CEB for consideration in conjunction with its deliberations in preparation for the September Summit in the General Assembly. It further agreed to continue to pursue the implementation of NEPAD within its own programme of work. [...]

Conflict prevention

[...]

27. [...] In order to strengthen collective capacity for conflict prevention, the system's ability to diagnose and help resolve emerging conflicts would be enhanced by: (a) drawing more systematically on the diverse expertise in all parts of the United Nations system; (b) better utilizing the United Nations convening power and its capacity to bring together all actors who can contribute to conflict prevention; and (c) basing the system's interventions on deeper analysis of its comparative advantages, rather than principally on the availability of funds.

- The development and political sides of the United Nations should engage in more active dialogue and should seek to identify best practices in this respect. Stronger links need to be forged in particular among the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), the Executive Committee for Peace and Security (ECPS) and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA), and between them and universities and think tanks engaged in conflict prevention.
- A set of instruments, similar to the tools that the United Nations has already developed to deal with post-conflict situations, needs to be developed in the area of conflict prevention. A survey, under the auspices of HLCP, of the system's capacities for conflict prevention should be conducted, and be made available on the CEB website. The system's links with civil society on conflict prevention also need to be substantially strengthened.
- The relevant parts of the draft CEB report on the response of the United Nations system to the Millennium Declaration, and the analysis in the draft of links between development support and conflict prevention, should avoid any impression that the system pursues policies that filter development assistance solely through the lens of conflict prevention. Social and economic security, including security against disease transmission, should be highlighted in the draft. Disarmament, the issues of discrimination against women, and intangible threats to peace such as prejudice, intolerance and ignorance, should also feature more prominently in this section of the report.
- The current international focus on security threats should not obscure the many other important challenges that the global community needs to address. Important root causes of conflict are marginalization, social exclusion and differential access to natural resources. Interventions to redress imbalances in this regard might, however, become in themselves sources of conflict. It was moreover observed that controlling or suppressing conflict may not always be possible or result in long-term stability.
- Development should continue to be addressed by the system in its own right, as well as in its linkages with security. There are many poor countries that are not facing armed conflict, but still require strong United Nations support. The situation should be avoided where overemphasis on the interdependence of issues leads to an impasse where both the United Nations system's security and development efforts are stalled because the relationship between the two issues is not sufficiently understood.
- Several developing countries would need increased ODA to effectively engage in conflict prevention. Also, insufficient attention is currently being given to conflict prevention as it relates to middle-income countries.

[...]

29. He requested that the note prepared by the Department of Political Affairs be reviewed in the light of the discussion and attached to the annotated agenda for CEB. HLCP members were invited to provide specific suggestions for strengthening the contribution to the section on conflict prevention of the draft CEB report on the response of the United Nations system to the Millennium Declaration. The Committee decided to revert to the consideration of this issue in the light of the conclusions emanating from the CEB discussion. [...]

Implementation of the development agenda at the country level

[...]

41. Recalling its mandate, the Committee decided to appoint a task group to review the practical implications of General Assembly resolution 59/250 for the work programme of HLCP and CEB, and to identify concrete ways for HLCP and UNDG to complement each other's work in ways that best exploit their respective strengths in advancing the objectives of the resolution and related conclusions adopted by CEB at its fall 2004 retreat. Terms of reference would be prepared to enable the Task Group to commence its work. The Task Group will report back to HLCP at its next meeting. [...]

Role of the United Nations system in the field of economic development — proposal by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization

[...]

42. The Committee recalled that CEB, at its fall 2004 session, had invited HLCP to pursue discussion on the proposal of the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to enhance the role of the United Nations system in the field of economic development as a means of advancing the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. [...]

47. [...] the Committee decided to establish an open-ended task force to pursue the proposal of UNIDO, and agree, in the first instance, on a well defined, specific work programme. It invited interested organizations to participate in the work of the task force and requested UNIDO to take the lead in convening and organizing the task force. The Committee requested the task force to report on the progress of its work at its meeting in September 2005 and to submit a final report to it in spring of 2006. [...]

Curbing transnational crime

[...]

49. The Committee took note of the progress made and endorsed the proposed programme of action contained in the note on the Joint action to curb transnational crime (see CEB/2005/HLCP/IX/CRP.7, annex A), and the suggestion that future progress reports be based on the joint activities identified. It was agreed that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime would report back to the Committee on the further advances in one year's time. [...]
