

agreed development goals, the President exhorted member states to enhance collaboration and policy coherence in order to tackle these challenges collectively. In this regard, Mr. Mérorès highlighted the role of the AMR and the DCF in promoting sharing of ideas on international development cooperation and aid effectiveness.

development strategies, is the only route to sustained economic progress in the long run and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The floor was then opened for the General Debate among Member States, UN agencies and other stakeholders.

Progress towards the development goals

Delegations highlighted their countries' progress in the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Many affirmed that they had taken into consideration the three pillars of sustainable development -- economic growth, social development, and environmental protection -- and included these principles in their national development and poverty reduction policies. Some nations supported the recommendations contained in the AMR report for international financial and technical collaboration to provide assistance for the development of policy frameworks to ensure sustainable growth. A number of countries reported that they had experienced high rates of economic growth in past years, which had facilitated progress towards the MDGs, and stressed that continued growth is vital for sustainable development. Several highlighted the benefits of increased agricultural investments and the merits of developing integrated frameworks on rural and agricultural development. It was reiterated that countries face different challenges and therefore should adopt country-specific strategies

Despite having achieved some progress towards the MDGs over the past decade, **the European Union (EU)** stated that it has been too slow and uneven. **The Group of 77 and China (G77)** observed that fundamental structure challenges persist, including widespread poverty, growing inequities among and between states, an unsustainable pattern of production and consumption, environmental mismanagement leading to climate change, and an entrenched inequality in the distribution of power in decision making. The **G77** and the **EU**, along with many other delegations noted that this is a challenging moment in history, pointing to a confluence of emerging crises – including the soaring cost of food and fuel, financial turmoil and the threat of climate change – that pose the risk of undermining progress achieved, especially in the most vulnerable countries.

Food Crisis

Many countries saw the current food crisis as the most pressing global challenge. Short-term humanitarian assistance in response is urgently needed to avert human suffering. Least Developed Countries (LDCs), especially in sub-Saharan Africa, and small-island developing states (SIDS), most of which are net importers of agricultural and food products, suffer most. Within those countries, the most vulnerable are hardest hit, particularly women. Countries called for increased humanitarian assistance in cooperation with international organizations, including UN agencies, which urgently require additional funding. Many countries welcomed the United Nations Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis established by the Secretary General and expressed the need to fulfil commitments made during the High-Level Conference on World Food Security, hosted by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in June 2008. Several countries also welcomed ECOSOC's special meeting on the Global Food Crisis.

However, many countries stressed that short-term measures must be complemented by longer-term solutions. **Chile** noted the food crisis presented an opportunity to reassess the rural sector, given concerted efforts by governments and the international community. Major efforts and assistance to increase agricultural productivity are needed to reduce poverty by providing livelihoods for smallholder farmers and to secure adequate food supplies. Irrigation, rural infrastructural development, increased use and development of climate-resilient, high-yielding varieties of seeds and extensive use of fertilizers were among the examples cited by delegations to increase agricultural productivity. Technology transfer and financial assistance with regard to increasing agricultural productivity were emphasized by developing countries and supported by donor countries. It was stressed that decline in aid on agriculture must be addressed.

Oil crisis

Sharp rises in oil prices have not only perpetuated a global economic slowdown but, in association with the food crisis, have also contributed to increasing levels of poverty. It was in this context that nations discussed the use of alternative sources of energy. Several delegates stressed that clean, affordable and renewable energy sources must be developed and widely deployed in order to reduce the world's carbon footprint and shield economies from the rise of oil prices. The **EU** emphasized that the transition to a low-carbon economy cannot be achieved without private sector involvement, and that market-based instruments are vital in order to work out a price for carbon and to direct private sector investment towards clean technologies and sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

Many speakers highlighted the projected devastating effects of climate change on ecosystems and agricultural production, especially in SIDS and LDCs. Stating that erratic wind and water-cycle patterns, rising sea levels, deforestation, desertification, floods, droughts, and losses in marine and aquatic resources are all manifestations of climate change, countries urged all Member States to follow sustainable paths toward development. In this regard, the **EU** highlighted the need for a successful negotiation of an international agreement on climate change in Copenhagen in 2009, reiterating its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020, and its offer to raise that level to 30% if other Parties undertake comparable efforts. The importance of all nations committing themselves to the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Action Plan

coordination and coherence among global macroeconomic and trade policies and the politics and actions of the international financial institutions. **The US** said ECOSOC has an important task to identify successful examples of how nations develop in sustainable ways and to share these experiences so others can adapt successful approaches to their own situations. The Council was also urged by several speakers, including the **G77**, to continue to be proactive by adapting its functions to emerging challenges, promptly addressing emerging issues and threats, as it has recently done through special meetings on the food crisis and on climate change, and exercising its coordinating responsibility. In this regard, the Council was encouraged to work more closely with the General Assembly, and other UN entities, such as the United Nations Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis.

Development Cooperation Forum and Annual Ministerial Review

Many delegations, including the **G77** and the **EU**, welcomed the full implementation of the two new functions of ECOSOC – the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum. They are considered as important mechanisms to strengthen the Council's role and foster policy dialogue among all relevant stakeholders to assess technical, financial and political barriers to the development efforts of nations. With those two features, the ECOSOC is well placed to efficiently monitor and advance the implementation of the global development agenda in line with the mandate provided by the Charter.

The **EU** noted that the AMR should allow ECOSOC to evaluate progress made in implementing the UN development agenda, building on its subsidiary bodies, particularly the Commission on Sustainable Development. Delegations welcomed the exchange of information and lessons-learned at the AMR National Voluntary Presentations. In particular, several noted the significance of the participation by developed countries this year. It was widely seen as a step forward in promoting mutual accountability in the fulfillment of international commitments in development cooperation and aid. **El Salvador** and **Moldova** announced their interest in volunteering for future presentations.

Many delegations welcomed the first DCF and expressed a strong desire to see it emerge as the main forum capable of providing the framework for dialogue on key issues of the development cooperation agenda, as well as facilitating the follow up to the Financing for Development agenda, following the Doha Conference on Financing for Development and the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. It was also seen as being particularly well positioned for discussion on aid effectiveness at a political level, and on issues such as appropriation, harmonization, alignment, results and mutual accountability. The **EU** said that the DCF should demonstrate its value by facilitating constructive, inclusive and open debate among all development partners with a focus on two or three issues and by facilitating experience sharing so as to contribute in a concrete manner to the major development meetings to be held at the end of 2008.

Initiatives and specific proposals

- **Indonesia, Egypt** and **Chile**, proposed that the 63rd Session of the General Assembly

- **El Salvador, Brazil, Mexico and India** requested a special session of the General Assembly on the fuel crisis, and **Belarus** proposed holding a thematic debate of the General Assembly on energy efficiency, new and renewable sources of energy.
- **Belgium** proposed that 10% of ODA of donor countries should be targeted to agriculture by 2010 and that the percentage of local purchases in international food assistance be increased.
- **Japan** called attention to the establishment of the “Cool Earth Partnership,” a financial mechanism within the World Bank on the scale of \$10 billion to support developing countries’ efforts to tackle climate change.
- **Bangladesh**, on behalf of LDCs, suggested the international community may consider establishing a global food bank and an International Food Fund to ensure long-term food security for developing countries, in particular for the LDCs.
- **Brazil** announced an international conference on biofuels, to be held in Sao Paulo this coming November.