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Deputy Secretary-General

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL HAS SPECIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN 2010 REVIEW OF MILLENNIUM

DEVELOPMENT GOALS, DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL TELLS MEMBERS

Following are UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro's remarks to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York today, 19 January:

At the outset, allow me to express my deep condolences to the people of Haiti. My heart also goes out to our colleagues, families and friends who have suffered a great loss. In these extremely challenging times, the United Nations is doing all it can to provide support.

It is a pleasure to attend this ceremony marking the handover of the ECOSOC Presidency. I should also take this opportunity to thank Your Excellency Ambassador Sylvie Lucas. I want to congratulate you and the outgoing Bureau for your leadership. Under your guidance, ECOSOC succeeded in mobilizing Member States and the United Nations system to forge consensus and act swiftly to tackle development challenges.

I am confident that President Hamidon Ali and the incoming Bureau will ably steer the Council this year, when a major focus of the United Nations work will be on development and in particular, the Millennium Development Goals.

I assure you of my full support and that of the entire Secretariat.

The next half-decade must see accelerated progress in delivering on long-standing commitments to the world's poorest and most vulnerable, above all those in Africa. Progress has been achieved in many countries -- across all Millennium Development Goals and across all regions. There have been important gains in combating extreme poverty, improving school enrolment and child health, expanding access to clean water, controlling malaria and making AIDS treatment more widely available.

Yet, despite this success, we are not on track to meeting all the Millennium Development Goals. We have not yet delivered on necessary financing, technical support and partnerships. The 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals will be a crucial opportunity to reinforce efforts and rebuild partnerships for the push towards 2015.

ECOSOC has a special role to play in the 2010 Millennium Development Goal review. In June, ECOSOC's Annual Ministerial Review will evaluate progress towards the Millennium

Development Goals, especially on promoting gender equality and empowering women. The 14 national reports to be presented at that session will offer analyses of lessons learned, gaps and obstacles.

We must also make the most of the Council's 2010 Development Cooperation Forum.

Let me turn now to the question of system-wide coherence. As you know, the General Assembly will shortly launch a new round of consultations. Two reports have been submitted to facilitate the process. The first covers operational activities for development, with a particular focus on enhancing the functioning of governing bodies, including ECOSOC.

I urge Member States to carefully examine how to enable the Council to perform its coordination and guidance role in an effective manner. This may call for greater functional coherence on development issues, policy coordination and setting operational policy for the United Nations development system. It will also require the Council's decisions to be more action-oriented.

The second report of the Secretary-General contains a comprehensive proposal for a composite gender entity. The sooner we can get this entity up and running, the better.

In recent years, ECOSOC has reached out to a variety of stakeholders. The engagement of civil society has been strengthened, both in terms of policy dialogue and operational collaboration. You have also considerably strengthened your relationship to foundations and the private sector, and initiated a number of partnerships.

Clearly, there is strong interest from all sides in joining forces and working together. I encourage the Council to further strengthen this dialogue and cooperation, including at next month's special event on "engaging philanthropy to promote women's empowerment and gender equality".

The Economic and Social Council has a vital role in coordinating United Nations system-wide work in the social and economic fields. As multiple crises persist, and as development challenges become ever more interlinked, Member States and the entire United Nations family look to the Council for policy and operational guidance.

You have much important work ahead. I look forward to working with you and wish you a most productive year.

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