



2.3.2010

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

(2/2010)

Subject: Summary of EMPL delegation to the UN - New York 3-5 February 2010

A delegation of the EMPL committee under its chair, composed of eight members, participated at the 48th session of the Commission on Social Development (CSoD) of the UN Ecosoc from 3-5 February 2010.

The delegation participated at the opening and subsequent meetings of the CSoD and held bilateral meetings with the Chairs of the CSoD and Ecosoc as well as UN officials.

I. Briefing by the EU delegation

The EMPL members met with the acting head, Mr Petro Serrano and the deputy head, Mr Peter Schwaiger of the EU's delegation. They briefed them on the profound modifications concerning the status and the role of the delegation, as it is assuming the functions of external representation and coordination of the EU's policies, following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

The EU has the status of observer in the UN and the rules of procedure for the Security Council allow non-members to intervene. However, this is not possible in the General Assembly or in the various UN bodies. In these bodies it is a representative of the country holding the rotating presidency for the various Council formations that can speak in the name of the EU.

The acting head of the delegation highlighted that the CSocD is the only UN body dealing with social issues and reminded that 2010 marks the 15th anniversary of the Copenhagen Summit. The work pattern of UN bodies alternates between "policy" and "review" years. This is a policy year for the CSoD and consequently the 48th session should be concluded with the adoption of a declaration or a resolution on the topic of social integration. For the next session, poverty eradication could be chosen as the main topic.

In a final consideration, the members agreed that the UN agenda evolves around the same concerns that are mirrored in the EU's priorities and policies. The EU is considered nevertheless a standard setter as it has advanced policy experience on most social issues dealt by the CSoD.

II. Opening session of the CSoD

Mr Leslie Kojo Christian, Ambassador of Ghana, chaired the opening session, to which Ambassador Hamidon Ali of Malaysia, President of ECOSOC, delivered an opening address. The speaker stressed the relevance of social integration as a fundamental ingredient of social development and indicated that the outcome document from the Commission on social development shall be transmitted to the ECOSOC. He underlined the need to promote a coordinated response on employment in the context of measures for an exit strategy from the economic and financial crisis. He mentioned the various recommendations ranging from efforts to provide employment and social protection for all and paying special attention to the most vulnerable. These policy recommendations have to be seen in the context of the implementation of the overarching millennium development goals.

Mr Sha Zhukang, under-secretary general for economic and social affairs, indicated that the 48th session shall produce an integrated response to the crisis and policy responses for social development. The 47th session highlighted the crucial role of social integration for peace and development. This policy session will tackle the multifaceted challenges the world faces. He reminded that 15 years ago the Social summit in Copenhagen put the focus on people-centred development. The Declaration of Copenhagen in 1995 spearheaded various declarations and instruments adopted since, which have promoted the protection and integration of vulnerable communities and social groups. One key lesson drawn is that economic growth alone is not enough to reduce poverty and hunger but it is also crucial to reduce inequality. Policies aimed at guaranteeing a minimum set of social transfers and rights promote greater stability.

III. The panel discussions

In the context of the 48th session, two round tables were organised, one on the follow-up to the world summit for social development of Copenhagen and another on social integration.

Panel on the follow up of the World Summit for Social Development

The chair, Mr Leslie Kojo Christian, Ambassador of Ghana, referred to the 10 commitments which were included in the Declaration of Copenhagen and underlined that adequate funding for social policies is a prerequisite for the promotion of social inclusion.

Mr. Gonnot, acting director of the UN division for social policy and development presented a report stressing the role of specific policies which must be carried out, such as the provision of general services especially in the area of health and education. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of civil engagement and broad-base participation in the delivery of these policies. The deputy secretary general highlighted the importance of these policies in the specific case of Africa and observed that the lack of social programmes protecting families and children from the effects of the crisis has very negative effects. Sustainable systems of social security, access to public health and education are the main elements of a comprehensive policy for social development. In this context, he supported putting in place a bottom-up appraisal process with the use of indicators.

Spanish Minister for health and social affairs, Mrs Trinidad Jiménez, spoke on behalf of the EU, expressing support for the policy goals of the CSoD. She stressed that social development is a key ingredient for stability and prosperity and observed that unemployment has increased considerably affecting, in particular, the young and temporary workers, immigrants and older persons. Youth unemployment in the EU stands at 21,4% instead of 14,7% two years ago. She underlined the need to develop a strategy for convergence and integration which recognises more explicitly that strong social and cohesion policies provide the pillar for the development of our societies. She referred to the ILO 'Global Jobs Pact' as offering an adequate policy mix of options that should lead out of the crisis. She mentioned the proposal of the European Commission to base the framework of the new strategy of post 2010 on the social market economy, inclusion and transparency.

The representative of the civil society forum, stressed the importance of equality of rights and equitable development and observed that social exclusion has dramatic effects on social development. Mr Abdullah M. Alsaidi, Ambassador of Yemen, representing the group of 77 and China, indicated that the crisis has undermined the confidence in the economic system and set back social integration. The goal of an inclusive society for all is essential and this includes addressing poverty, unemployment and education. He called for an international agreed social development assistance and technical support.

Panel on social integration

The speakers endorsed the report by the secretary-general on "Promoting social integration". Economic development with an equitable distribution is the basis for promoting the social integration stressed Mr Enrique Deibe, secretary of state for employment of Argentina, speaking on behalf of Mercosur. He stressed that the problems of poverty, unemployment and social marginalisation can be overcome with the adoption of a development model focused on decent work and quality jobs.

Speaking on behalf of the EU, the Spanish Minister of health and social affairs Mrs Trinidad Jiménez, supported the three main objectives included in the Plan of Action: poverty reduction, promotion of employment and social integration. She reminded the various strategies launched by the EU, in pursuit of these objectives, namely the employment strategy, the Lisbon strategy and the social inclusion strategy. The lessons drawn from these strategies shall inspire the design of the new Social Agenda within the new strategy 2020. She reiterated

the EU's commitment to help developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reminding that the EU is the world's largest aid donor and major trading partner. She called for the establishment of a new sustainable social market economy and for concrete measures to accelerate the implementation of the MDGs with particular emphasis on persons with disabilities, young and older persons.

The Dutch Minister of social affairs and employment, Mr Piet Hein Donner, focused on the role of decent work and social protection. He applauded the adoption by the General Assembly of "full employment and decent work for all" as a theme for the Second United Nations Decade for the eradication of poverty (2008-2017), insisting it should have the highest priority. He asked for reinforced efforts in the implementation of the programme of decent work underlining the important role of social protection as a basic pillar of decent work.

IV. Bilateral meetings

The delegation held a number of bilateral meetings with the key players of the 48th session of the CSoD. During the bilateral meeting with Mr Hamidon Ali, Ambassador of Malaysia and current President of the ECOSOC, the EMPL chair indicated that the EU is currently assessing the impact of the crisis on social policies and that the external dimension of EU's strategies is attracting increasing importance. The ambassador referred to the role of the Bretton Woods institutions in alleviating the impact of the crisis on developing countries. He called for a close examination of the appropriate strategies to apply, such as the financing or funding of infrastructure development, and indicated that the governance of the financial system should be re-examined. He insisted that special care should be taken to avoid a clash between developed and developing countries, as priority should be given to on how to mobilise the economies to provide jobs and food for people. Members also made reference to policies aimed at the inclusion of ethnic minorities and the ambassador referred to the importance of ensuring that every community shares equal rights and use of its language and culture. In this context, he highlighted the role of education policies in integration as a means of promoting a better understanding.

At the meeting with Ambassador Kojo Christian (Chair of CSoD) the EMPL Chair stressed the importance of the topics addressed by the CSoD for the EMPL committee and the European Parliament in particular and the coincidence with the European year 2010 for combating poverty and social exclusion. The Chair of the CSoD indicated that the topic of social integration derives from the Copenhagen Summit which had established the goal of an inclusive society for all. He expressed the hope that the conclusion of the session will be marked by the adoption of a resolution which will be addressed to the ECOSOC. He welcomed contributions from the EU, indicating that a consensus will be necessary.

At the meeting with Assistant secretary general Jomo Kwame Sundaram, EMPL members stressed the relevance of inclusion policies for the most vulnerable, in particular young people, immigrants and disabled persons. The assistant secretary general indicated that the scope of the Social Commission for Development had been defined by the Copenhagen Summit and underlined that ageing, social integration, poverty, disability, are the topics at the core of the work of the commission. Because of the crisis, there is now a focus on its impact

on employment. Hence, the need to make sure that employment is taken properly into consideration in view of reducing poverty. He indicated that the UN works together with the ILO and referred to research by the international institute of labour studies, highlighting the increasing time-lag in employment recovery. For the 1991 recession, economic output was recovered within three quarters, but for employment it took more than 2 years. In 2001 it took the same time for economic recovery but for employment more than 4 years was necessary. He expressed concern that in the current severe recession, employment recovery will take even more. He consequently called not to sacrifice long term sustainability for short term considerations, as there is mounting tension between the need to reduce the budget deficits and the objective of job creation.

ANNEX

DELEGATION TO NEW YORK

3 to 5 February 2010

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Members	Pervenche BERÈS Elisabeth MORIN-CHARTIER Regina BASTOS Edith BAUER Vincenzo IOVINE Milan CABRNOCH Thomas HÄNDEL Francesco SPERONI	Chairwoman - S&D EPP Vice-Coordinator EPP EPP ALDE ECR GUE/NGL EFD
Secretariat	Panos KONSTANTOPOULOS Sandra ALMEIDA	Head of Unit Assistant
Political Groups	Alena CARNA Rebecca AMORENA	EPP EFD
Interpreters	F. JOOSTENS M. GIROT K. TWIDLE	FR FR EN