

**Oral report on decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its  
substantive session of 2005 that are of relevance to UNICEF:  
background note**

1. The overall theme of the Council's substantive session of 2005 was "Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities".

**High-level segment**

2. The High-level segment included roundtable discussions and breakfast meetings, which were organized from 29 June to 1 July 2005. The objective of the roundtables and discussions was to deepen dialogue on critical issues; participants included representatives of the United Nations system, delegations and civil society representatives. The High-level Segment also featured keynote addresses by Heads of State and Government on the session's theme. The session also featured a new element of "Voices against Poverty" during which non-United Nations actors gave their views on the Millennium Development Goals.

3. As in previous years, the Council held preparatory roundtables organized by agencies, funds and programmes; taking place on 16 and 17 March, these events covered the following topics: eradication of poverty and hunger; education and literacy; health and mortality; global partnerships and financing for development; gender equality and the empowerment of women; environmental sustainability; and implementation of the Goals at the country level.

4. UNICEF, with UNESCO, organized and participated in a roundtable on education and literacy which was chaired by H.E. Mr. Johan C. Verbeke (Belgium), Vice-President of the Council. In addition, UNICEF helped to organize the roundtable on health and mortality.

**Operational activities segment**

5. The Executive Director, making her first appearance before the Council, participated in the annual dialogue with Executive Heads of the United Nations funds and programmes (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP). The dialogue had as its themes: (a) strengthening the Resident Coordination system; (b) programme alignment; (c) the role of regional structures in supporting operational effectiveness; and (d) sector programme and national capacity development.

6. The Deputy Director, Programme Division, participated in an interactive dialogue on operational activities for development of the United Nations system on “Introducing operational reforms in the United Nations development system in the pursuit of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration”.

7. In response to the Council’s resolution on operational activities (E/2005/L.29), which was largely procedural in nature, the Annual Report of the Executive Director to the Council, to be presented at the first regular session of 2006, will include an update of the management-process matrix, and the use within the matrix of quantifiable targets and measurable benchmarks with defined time frames at the system level; and a better reflection of funding for operational activities, including a better distinction between contributions made for humanitarian assistance and for long-term development cooperation.

### **Humanitarian activities segment**

8. The Executive Director and other members of the UNICEF secretariat participated in panel discussions during this segment. The secretariat is following up on the requests contained in the humanitarian activities resolution (E/2005/L.19), including: identifying and using appropriate and available local resources and expertise from affected countries and/or their neighbours; and to further develop and improve mechanisms for the use of emergency standby capacities, including regional humanitarian capacities.

### **Other matters**

9. The secretariat will provide regular updates on its support to the ad hoc advisory groups on Guinea Bissau and Burundi.