



# Chief Executives Board for Coordination

23 March 2009

English only

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## Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes on its seventeenth session

(Geneva, 26 and 27 February 2009)

### I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its seventeenth session in Geneva on 26 and 27 February 2009. The agenda of the meeting (annex I) and the list of participants (annex II) are attached to the present report.

2. In his opening remarks, the newly appointed Chairman of the High-level Committee, Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Juan Somavía, welcomed the opportunity to lead the Committee towards greater policy coherence and results that would have a positive impact on the lives of the people whom the United Nations system served. He paid tribute to his predecessor, Lennart Båge, the outgoing President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and drew attention to the relevance of the products that the Committee had delivered during Mr. Båge's tenure, including the "One United Nations" report and the CEB *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work*.

3. The Chairman noted that the policy and institutional vacuums in which the global financial and economic crisis was unfolding presented an enormous opportunity for the United Nations system, working through the High-level Committee, to make an important contribution to the international community. As the Committee operated in the policy field, the policy gap in tackling the crisis provided it with an opportunity to devise a more coherent approach. The Committee could also play an important role in addressing the institutional requirements by helping to put together a global vision, with a linkage to what needed to be done within the United Nations system.

4. The Chairman also recalled the review that he had carried out with Pascal Lamy, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), aimed at improving the functioning, role and impact of CEB. Two important outcomes of that review were the empowerment of the Board's subsidiary structure, affording the pillars a higher level of autonomy, and the integration of the United Nations Development Group into the CEB framework. The High-level Committee on Programmes had a strong foundation, broad representation and legitimacy of mandate — the policy analysis function of the Committee, according to the CEB



review. In addition, there was the legitimacy of the added value of the products that the Committee would deliver. The Chairman stressed that the ambition should be to deliver results that had a real impact and made a real difference. Hence, the work of the Committee was not just about global policy, but also about how such policy affects people on the ground, and the Committee needed to combine those two aspects, working together with the other CEB pillars. While he, as Chairman, would do whatever he could to advance that approach, what emerged in the end would depend on the collective capacity and commitment of Committee members. He encouraged members to air policy differences in a spirit of teamwork that would lead to the identification of common ground and positive solutions.

5. The Chairman stressed the importance of the Committee's focusing in its sessions on joint, strategic and action-oriented matters. He urged all organizations that wished to provide briefings on their activities to use the services of the CEB secretariat to exchange such information by electronic means, rather than using the limited time available for meetings.

## **II. The global financial crisis and its impact on the work of the United Nations system**

6. The Chairman thanked the member organizations of the High-level Committee on Programmes for their written contributions to his issues paper on the global financial crisis. He suggested that the Committee look more deeply into how best the United Nations system could organize itself and its components work together with a view to enhancing the capacity of Governments and other stakeholders to deal with the crisis. He pointed to processes already in motion as the backdrop to the consideration of the agenda item, including within the United Nations system by individual organizations, the Stiglitz Commission, appointed by the President of the General Assembly, and the Assembly's Doha follow-up conference, to be held in June; as well as the G-20, G-8 and other processes outside the United Nations. He added that CEB would dedicate its retreat at its forthcoming first regular session to the financial crisis.

7. The Chairman presented the key elements of his paper, noting that the crisis had moved from the financial sector to the real economy, possibly eventually leading to a "social recession" that would have political consequences. The United Nations system had long pointed out that globalization was not fair or inclusive. Prevailing policies had overvalued the role of markets, undervalued the role of Governments and devalued social, environmental and other factors. A sustainable solution would require a focus on people, as well as on the humanitarian and social aspects of the crisis. A global crisis required a global response, and the CEB member organizations were well placed to work together in key policy areas where coherence was crucial for results and impact. The individual contributions that all organizations had provided to the Committee had led to the identification of seven broad policy dimensions to deepen policy coherence and collaborative action: (a) finance; (b) trade; (c) employment, production and aggregate demand; (d) environment; (e) social service, empowerment and protection of people; (f) humanitarian, security and social stability; and (g) development and international cooperation.

8. Going back to business as usual was not an option. In many of the national stimulus packages there was already an emerging focus on jobs, social protection, safety nets and greening the economy. The Chairman noted the important differences among countries and identified different situations: some had fiscal space (mainly in Asia and parts of Latin America); others had no fiscal space but had access to markets (the United States of America, Japan and Europe); and some developing countries had neither fiscal space nor access to markets. The International Monetary Fund and other creditors would need to support those middle-income countries that could not access the market, while the least developed countries would have no option but to count on external aid. The measures taken by some countries were counter-cyclical, while those taken by others were pro-cyclical. The major challenge was to combine all of those elements into a coherent response. At a moment when it was not clear where ideas could come from, the United Nations system had an opportunity to contribute on the basis of the expertise of its members by working together with urgency to come up with analysis and practical action.

9. Kwame Sundaram Jomo, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, made the case for policy priorities for the United Nations system in the global financial crisis. He characterized the crisis as a “Bretton Woods moment”, referring to: (a) concerns relating to the response to the crisis as it continued to unfold; (b) the need to prevent future crises; and (c) the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, held in 1944, which had conceived of the monetary and financial system as part of a larger system of inclusive multilateralism predicated on a vision of development, growth and equity. He highlighted the fact that financial globalization had contributed to the vulnerability and fragility of the global financial system and to the spread of the crisis. He noted the many challenges imposed by the crisis: (a) falling commodity prices; (b) contracting export markets; (c) a drop in domestic demand; (d) lower employment and incomes; (e) slowing foreign direct investment; (f) a drop in stock markets, with negative effects on wealth; (g) a downward trend in bank lending growth; and (h) a slowdown in the domestic investment rate.

10. The Assistant Secretary-General emphasized that the vast majority of those negatively affected by the crisis had not contributed to the factors that precipitated it. He also noted the sense of frustration among the 171 Member States that were not part of the G-20, and the sense that they were excluded from playing a role in addressing the crisis.

11. With regard to policy, the Assistant Secretary-General identified three priorities: (a) limiting the spread of the financial crisis; (b) reflating economies in a proactive fashion; and (c) recognizing the need for regulatory reform. He stressed the importance of long-term considerations to finance growth and employment creation, as well as a broader commitment to inclusive finance. There was, however, a need to recognize and deal with the reality that aid was likely to decline. While there was a tendency to think of public spending to improve physical infrastructure, it was also important to see this as an opportunity to strengthen social services and social protection, which were fundamentally counter-cyclical in their impact. With regard to the need for regulatory reform, while most regulation was at the national level, far more international cooperation and coordination was necessary.

12. He stressed the relevance and importance of the United Nations development agenda — the summation of the internationally agreed development goals of the major United Nations conferences of the past two decades — in relation to the work of the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations and of the Bretton Woods institutions. The United Nations system was the only significant institution that had anticipated the crisis. Unfortunately, those concerns had been largely ignored by Governments. The Assistant Secretary-General therefore suggested that developing the capacity to provide second opinions was an important matter for the Committee to consider. He further appealed for enhanced alignment between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions to ensure greater policy coherence in dealing with the challenges posed by the financial crisis.

13. In the ensuing discussion, several participants stressed that this was, indeed, a new “Bretton Woods moment”. While there were no quick fixes, initiatives such as the vulnerability fund promoted by the World Bank constituted concrete responses to the impact of the crisis on the poor and the vulnerable. In this regard, the Committee recommended that CEB endorse the vulnerability fund to demonstrate the commitment of the United Nations system to addressing the crisis in a fully coherent and effective manner. Furthermore, the need for a joint World Bank-United Nations system approach for the further development, management and implementation of the vulnerability fund was supported.

14. The representative of WTO emphasized the role that trade had to play in the recovery process and in the fight against protection — hence the importance of completing the Doha Round and continuing or even increasing aid-for-trade programmes, as well as the value of its enhanced trade policy review monitoring. With a view to stimulating trade, WTO was also working with the World Bank and others on the issue of trade finance so as to increase liquidity available for trade. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in the light of comments on its report *A Global Green New Deal*, which had been reviewed by United Nations agencies and experts and presented to the Governing Council of the Programme in February 2009, was developing a policy brief that could be put forward to Government leaders at major international forums in coming months. Social protection was pointed to as an important area where the United Nations system could take a more ambitious approach by preparing an options paper for consideration by Governments. There was also a need for a substantial response to the employment impact of the crisis to pave the way to a “global jobs pact”, which would focus on preventing job losses, creating new employment opportunities and supporting social protection for people who had lost their jobs and income. It would also contribute to curbing opportunities for criminal activities such as human trafficking, illegal migration, drug cultivation and drug abuse, which were expected to increase. As sub-prime mortgages were at the root of the crisis, housing finance also needed to be factored into the response.

15. It was also noted by several participants that, in the present crisis, technology, innovation and creativity would be critical in creating opportunities for economic renewal leading to a more innovative, eco-friendly and sustainable world. Innovation and creative systems, with all of their research, industrial and commercial networks, were strategic assets that needed to be protected and strengthened, just like the traditional infrastructure or the financial sectors. Promoting the use of intellectual property as a means of stimulating the development of a technology and knowledge infrastructure to achieve long-term

sustainable development would become more critical than ever. In addition, it was pointed out that many policy actions to address the crisis could be most effectively undertaken at the regional level, and that the expertise and activities of many regional institutions could be readily mobilized. The approach of the United Nations system and the international community in responding to the crisis would have to be broad enough to incorporate all of those aspects.

16. Members of the Committee felt that CEB should articulate a coherent system-wide response to the financial crisis similar to the response to the food crisis. Some anticipated that Member States would come to the United Nations for assistance when they had exhausted other remedies, as had been the case when the food crisis took on a security dimension in 2008. The United Nations system should therefore already be preparing entry points for a concrete response, in the event of its being asked to intervene in the crisis, that the Secretary-General could put forward at such forums as the G-20. Members of the Committee were also of the view that, despite increasing convergence between the Bretton Woods institutions and the rest of the United Nations system, it would be beneficial for countries to understand the perspective of the United Nations system.

17. While the Bretton Woods institutions had come a long way from the imposition of policies on national authorities, there was scope for further coordination and collaboration between the institutions and the rest of the United Nations system in country-level operations, including the preparation of development assistance frameworks. It was considered important to focus on gaps; on the interconnections among climate change, food security and the financial crisis; and on the human dimension of the crisis, including in terms of fighting hunger and malnutrition. The United Nations system had an important role to play in advocating for the rights and protection of marginalized and other vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, not least because of the linkages to security and social stability. There was also a need for the system to advocate the clear link between the crisis and the comprehensive development agenda. It was suggested that, in this regard, the United Nations system could improve the impact of its messaging through better harmonization of its reports, thus making a stronger case for multilateralism and positioning the knowledge base of the United Nations system as a resource that was available, relevant and of the highest quality.

18. Members of the Committee cautioned against complacently equating multilateralism with the United Nations system, which should not be viewed as the same thing. For example, owing to donor preference, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, while it had been launched as a United Nations initiative, had eventually materialized outside the United Nations framework.

19. It was considered vital for the United Nations system to be mindful of the pre-existing crises that had already been affecting vulnerable populations around the globe. In that regard, participants pointed to the need to maintain a steady focus on meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, with particular reference to the health and well-being of women and children. Given that the developing countries were the hardest hit, there was a need to remind donors to honour their commitments to increased official development assistance. The evolution of the G-20 as a locus for addressing the crisis was evidence of the G-7 seeking greater collaboration with developing countries. It also set the stage for a positive hearing for the Secretary-General at the

G-20 in delivering a message advocating fair and inclusive globalization leading to sustainable development in all its aspects and drawing attention to the earlier underlying crisis of the poor.

20. It was noted that some 90 countries would be rolling out development assistance frameworks in the next three years, providing a unique opportunity for the United Nations system to come together. In addition to the operational organizations, the non-resident agencies also had an important contribution to make to that work. While most of the member organizations of the Committee were part of the United Nations country teams that worked with local authorities on the development assistance frameworks, there was also a need for the United Nations Development Group to follow up on the stance that the Committee was taking and, in that regard, the mutual sharing of information between the United Nations Development Group and the Committee was essential. Furthermore, efforts at the regional level should be brought to bear on the initiative through enhanced cooperation between the Committee and the regional commissions.

21. It was noted that there was a growing consensus that more resources were needed for IMF, as it was the first to provide resources to countries to allow a phased adjustment to the crisis, and it was estimated that low-income countries would face an additional balance-of-payments financing need of at least \$25 billion in 2009 as a result of the crisis. There was an urgent need for such external resources to be identified if the progress that countries had achieved over the past 10 years was not to be undone.

22. In response to requests for a clear timetable for action by the United Nations system, the Chairman drew attention to several upcoming events, including (a) the Secretary-General's participation in the G-20 meeting, to be held in London on 2 April; (b) the first regular session of CEB, to be hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris on 4 and 5 April; (c) the annual spring dialogue of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and WTO, to be held in New York on 27 April; (d) the General Assembly conference on the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development, to be held, at the highest level, in New York from 1 to 4 June; (e) the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, to be held in Geneva early in July (the coordination segment was scheduled to start on 10 July); and (f) the G-8 summit to be held on 10 and 11 July. The Chairman emphasized that the United Nations system should also position itself at expert and other forums. The Chairman would, in this regard, revise his issue paper on the financial crisis on the basis of the discussions in the Committee as a contribution to the Secretary-General's participation in the G-20 meeting and further discussion at the upcoming CEB retreat. The possibility of producing a statement after the CEB retreat would further be considered, and the Chairman would consult with the Secretary-General on the issue. The papers produced could also be shared with the governing bodies of the various United Nations system entities, with a view to achieving as comprehensive and consistent an approach as possible.

23. The Committee concluded that:

(a) **Inputs for the revised issue paper to be presented by the Chairman and discussed at the CEB retreat should be submitted to him by 13 March 2009;**

(b) **The Committee would develop the identified joint United Nations system initiatives for immediate response to the crisis on the basis of a sustainable development approach (economic, social and environmental sustainability) (see annex III). The respective lead agencies and cooperating agencies would establish a framework for action in each area by 10 April 2009;**

(c) **Following the first regular session of CEB and the mandate received by executive heads, the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group could jointly discuss ways to translate those policy directions and joint initiatives at the country level;**

(d) **Individual agencies and bodies other than the High-level Committee, including the United Nations Development Group, would, of course, be free to respond to requests by the General Assembly and others for material and views from each organization's perspective;**

(e) **Following the General Assembly's June conference, and depending on its outcome as well as other developments, the need for an intersessional meeting of the Committee in July, on the sidelines of the Economic and Social Council session, would be considered;**

(f) **The CEB secretariat would develop, with possible support from the United Nations Communications Group, a communications and advocacy strategy, including an Internet site, a calendar and a possible CEB press conference, as well as interacting with other forums;**

(g) **The Chairman would seek the Secretary-General's guidance on the possibility of producing a statement after the CEB retreat.**

### **III. Regional coherence**

24. Joining the meeting by video link from Bangkok, Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and current coordinator of the regional commissions, introduced the note on coherence at the regional level and provided a regional perspective on the impact of the financial crisis. In so doing, she underscored the commitment of the regional commissions to working closely with the Committee.

25. She enumerated the many policy actions being taken at the regional level with regard to the global financial crisis, which could be reflected in the further work of the Committee in promoting policy coherence. The regional commissions had an important role to play in serving as a regional interface between Governments and the United Nations system and as a forum for policy debates and the sharing of best practices, as well as facilitating dialogue at regional and global debates. She added that the regional perspective was also crucial when looking at the multilateral system and the new international financial architecture, as well as overseas development aid. As no country could ride out the crisis on its own, attention needed to be given to building coordinated action for common prosperity. There were a number of actions being taken or contemplated at the regional and subregional levels that interfaced with the regional arms of the United Nations, which could be taken into account in the United Nations system's response to the crisis.

26. She noted that her experience with the Regional Coordination Mechanism had been very positive, and that the Mechanism had been mobilized to promote coherence in several policy and programme areas. It had, for example, brought together the 27 United Nations entities operating in the region of Asia and the Pacific to respond as a coordinated whole to the agenda of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The Regional Coordination Mechanism had also accelerated the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through regional cooperation, with the support of the thematic groups. There were also many transboundary issues that required a coherent policy approach, including climate change, gender, disaster risk reduction, migration and human trafficking. The Mechanism's role in providing coherent policy support to United Nations country teams in this regard had been significant. Another area where it had played an important role was in following up global mandates and initiatives that required a regional response. Furthermore, a back-to-back meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and the Regional Directors' Team on 19 February 2009 on the issue of the financial crisis had brought together the policy and operational dimensions in a coherent whole, allowing for a package of responses at both the regional and the subregional, as well as the country, levels. She noted the common purpose that the Committee and the Regional Coordination Mechanism shared in pursuing the normative and policy agenda of the United Nations and, hence, the benefits of institutionalizing the practical linkages between the global and regional levels in support of system-wide coherence.

27. In the discussion, considerations centred on the institutional issue of how to best articulate the linkage of the policy analytical functions at the regional level with the global policy analysis function of the Committee, without giving rise to a bureaucratic report-intensive approach. It was noted that the regional directors' teams had brought a good regional perspective to the United Nations Development Group as far as operational activities were concerned, and that the report commissioned by the regional commissions on that issue had recommended that there be a similar link between the Regional Coordination Mechanism, which looked at the policy and analysis aspect of the agenda, and the Committee.

28. It was emphasized that progress in this regard would be an important achievement that could potentially have a significant impact through the mobilization of the collective resources of the United Nations system. It was also noted that the recommendations that emerged from the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities had also included a request that the regional commissions support intensive inter-agency collaboration at the regional and subregional levels.

29. The Coordinator clarified that the regional commissions had two roles: (a) responding to the needs and priorities of Member States in terms of transnational, regional issues that needed to be addressed through regional cooperation, as well as providing a platform for solid analysis leading to policy options and good practices supported by technical capacity-building services to Member States; and (b) serving as convenors of the Regional Coordination Mechanism to promote United Nations policy coherence and responses at the regional level. With regard to the latter, she noted that the specialized agencies were taking the lead in the Regional Coordination Mechanism thematic groups relating to their respective areas of competence. As was clear from the Committee's consideration of the global financial crisis, many of the responses would have to be

coordinated at the subregional or regional level as much as at the global level. It was important to draw upon the strengths of all perspectives in taking forward the issue of institutional arrangements. Ms. Heyzer suggested that the Coordinator might participate in a regular manner in the deliberations of the High-level Committee, reporting on pertinent developments at the regional level. She invited the Chairman to attend the Regional Coordination Mechanism in April 2009.

**30. The Committee decided to invite the regional commissions, as convenors of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, to bring to the deliberations of the Mechanism those global issues that the Committee may wish to pursue at the regional level, bearing in mind regional priorities and the roles and functional machinery of the Mechanism. The Committee also decided to invite the regional commissions, as convenors of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, to bring to the deliberations of the Committee any emerging interregional issues that merited consideration at the global level.** The Committee Chairman would, in order to make it clear that steps had been taken to link the work of the Committee with the Regional Coordination Mechanism, communicate that decision to the executive secretaries of the five regional commissions.

#### **IV. Climate change**

31. The representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change noted that eventual agreement at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Copenhagen, might have profound implications for the work of United Nations system agencies. Beyond dealing with an environmental problem, it was necessary to accelerate an economic transition, involving innovation in policy and institutions and new alignments of interest. Success at Copenhagen would be measured more on the basis of the mechanisms, institutions and processes set in motion than of the emission targets assigned to individual countries. He cautioned that we should not speak of a climate “crisis” but rather of a long-term challenge that would be present even after the current financial crisis had been tackled. He underlined the urgency of the issue, citing the narrow window of opportunity in 2009 to take urgent and decisive action to prevent disruptive climate-change impacts in the future.

32. All issues had been put on the table at the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Poznan, Poland, in 2008. In 2009 there would be a minimum of four negotiating sessions, the first one starting on 29 March in Bonn, Germany. At the following session early in June, a formal negotiating text would be presented. Key questions were how to mobilize financial and technology flows and how to apply such flows effectively in developing countries for both adaptation and mitigation. United Nations system agencies could make contributions to those areas in terms of deliverables by the time of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, but they should also focus on reaching a broader vision combining sustainable development, climate change and other interconnected challenges. The Convention secretariat had undertaken to identify gaps and provide analysis to the convening agencies of the CEB climate change initiative to assist in the planning of collaborative work in the various areas, with attention to what was needed for Copenhagen.

33. The Director of the Secretary-General's Climate Change Support Team praised the progress made in 2008 by the United Nations system towards delivering as one on climate change. As had been discussed at the inter-agency consultations in Poznan, there was an increasing need to emphasize the substance, which meant more flexibility in reporting requirements for the working groups in the focus and cross-cutting areas. Some of the collaborative projects pursued might be relevant at Copenhagen, but they might also anticipate new agreements that would come out of Copenhagen. With regard to a broader, eco-friendly vision, he suggested starting with the Committee's discussion of the global financial crisis and bringing in climate change and other relevant issues.

34. The Secretary-General had designated 2009 as "the year of climate change" and had requested each United Nations department or division to examine what could be done for Copenhagen. He was also working intensively with his special envoys and the Climate Change Support Team, as well as the "troika" of the previous, current and next President of the Conference of the Parties. He was in contact with heads of State or Government to keep them engaged in the process, as negotiations would require political impetus and direction if the aims were to be achieved. On 22 September 2009, the Secretary-General would host another high-level event on climate change in New York. As this would be pivotal for the Conference of the Parties to take place a few months later in Copenhagen, the hope was that all or most countries would be represented by heads of State or Government. The Secretary-General was also working on other ways to engage heads of State or Government, individually and collectively, in order to generate political impetus before the upcoming negotiating sessions and the first Copenhagen outcome draft, due in June.

35. The Chairman of the Committee working group on climate change presented the progress report. He reviewed the process of inter-agency coordination on climate change since its inception in 2007 through Bali and Poznan, noted the input consistently provided by the Convention secretariat and the Secretary-General's Office and reminded the Committee of the early decision not to seek to create a heavy coordination structure to deal with the challenge. In Poznan, a joint publication had been presented (available online at <http://www.un.org/climatechange>) and a side event with the Secretary-General and other United Nations system leaders had been held. A good discussion among the working group members present in Poznan had led to some common understandings, which were encapsulated in the proposed way forward that needed the endorsement of the Committee. The Committee would review the ongoing collaborative work at its regular session in September so that CEB could decide at its fall session how the United Nations system could present itself in Copenhagen, with a view to the future.

36. The Director of the CEB secretariat pointed to the limited resources with which the Secretariat had been trying to support that effort and thanked the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and IFAD for their generosity in that regard. He noted that the substantive engagement of the secretariat would end after Copenhagen. The convening agencies were rightly given flexibility to take forward this CEB initiative without artificial deadlines, but keeping in mind that the programme of work should allow for a CEB decision in October 2009. Furthermore, progress would need to be made on a broader vision. Finally, a virtually full-fledged inventory of United Nations system activities on climate change had been set up

online with contributions from around the system, and it would soon be launched publicly (<http://www.un.org/climatechange/projectsearch>).

37. The representative of UNDP spoke on behalf of the United Nations Development Group and presented the work on which the Development Group Task Team on Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability had embarked under the co-chairmanship of UNDP and UNEP. The intention was to develop tools to improve support for United Nations system cooperation on climate change at the country level. The Task Team's work for 2009 focused on four result areas: (a) case studies on climate change, based on a survey and interviews with United Nations country teams on actions they had been taking in response to country needs in the focus and cross-cutting areas; (b) principles for division of labour within country teams, focusing on recommendations to ensure the implementation of the "delivering as one" initiative, country ownership and making best use of agency comparative advantages; (c) a guidance note for country teams on mainstreaming environmental sustainability for incorporation into the Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidelines; and (d) the mapping of existing methodologies and guidance on climate change, which would provide the basis for a decision on what kind of guidance note would need to be developed for country teams on climate change.

38. The importance of the climate change challenge and of the United Nations system "delivering as one" was reaffirmed. The primary focus should be on assisting the negotiations in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and helping vulnerable people exposed to natural disasters and malnutrition. The good work being done by the system needed to be recognized. The convening agencies should be helped so that they could further develop, and present in Copenhagen, concrete action plans and pragmatic inputs to the Convention process.

39. Closer collaboration between the Committee and the United Nations Development Group was encouraged, and it was suggested that it would be helpful to identify a bridging mechanism between the two. With regard to the regional dimension, climate change was an issue on which the institutional linkage established between the regional coordination mechanisms and the Committee could be applied through joint work. A mapping exercise was under way on climate change work at the regional level, which would be brought to the Committee. A United Nations system-wide Web space could be created to allow agencies to gain access to documents and mechanisms and enable colleagues working on various aspects of climate change to better share information. Stronger links could be established on adaptation between the Committee process and that under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, especially on support for the most vulnerable. The human dimension of climate change should be kept in focus.

40. Preparations continued for the third World Climate Conference, to be held in Geneva from 31 August to 4 September 2009, whose programme cuts across relevant sectors, including food, agriculture, energy, transportation and health, with United Nations system entities taking the lead in their respective areas of expertise. The aim was to establish an integrated global framework for climate services that would allow for the provision of not only local predictions on physical parameters but also user-tailored information and services for specific application in the sectors mentioned above.

41. It was proposed that the way forward in United Nations system cooperation on climate change should be based on a two-track approach:

(a) The convening agencies and working groups should focus on the substantive work in their respective areas, with possible preparation of reports on the work done in each area for presentation at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties;

(b) The High-level Committee and its working group on climate change would consider the elaboration of collective products for the fifteenth session within Committee/CEB timelines. This could mean another overview publication, as in Poznan, an action framework or strategy, or another product.

42. The Committee's attention was drawn to the need to find ways to mobilize action by people in developing countries in response to climate change. Agriculture was of particular importance, both as a sector greatly affected by climate change and as a source of greenhouse gas emissions. Putting more modern technologies at the disposal of small farmers in Africa and Asia would make a big difference. Progress in carbon trading methodology and techniques would allow measurement and certification of carbon sequestration by farmers and could play a major role in reducing carbon emissions and providing income to farmers.

43. The proposal to discuss the modalities of coming up with a broader shared vision was widely welcomed. It was noted that much had been achieved through collaborative action, but that linking the different crises with climate was now a central challenge. In that connection, it was important to look into ways of engaging the economy and the various sectors, including market mechanisms, in search of solutions and incentives attuned to each country's needs. Attention was drawn to the need to take into account in any suggestions for changes in consumption and production patterns the changes set in motion in that respect, de facto, by the financial/economic crisis, which also led to decreases in greenhouse gas emissions. In the context of the broader vision, it was also important to discuss the role of the United Nations in the post-Copenhagen architecture, including the management and delivery of financing, the promotion of the Millennium Development Goals, and the follow-up to the major conferences of the 1990s. Adaptation was not only an essential element of any climate change strategy but also part of the poverty eradication agenda.

44. The Chairman concluded the discussion of this item by thanking the members and Chairman of the Committee working group, the convening agencies and the CEB secretariat for the work they had been doing. He encouraged feedback to the groups and the convening agencies on work pursued in each area and stated that **there was overall agreement on the way forward both as presented in the paper before the High-level Committee (annex IV) and with respect to the two-track approach delineated in paragraph 41 above. On the broader vision in particular, the Chairman noted a convergence between the discussions on climate change and the financial crisis, within the context of fair and inclusive globalization and sustainable development.**

## V. Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

45. The representative of ILO introduced the note by ILO and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, referring to General Assembly resolution 63/230 on the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), which identified “Full employment and decent work for all” as a theme for the Decade. She recalled the important work that the Committee had already achieved in promoting policy coherence in this area through the development of the *CEB Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work* and noted that work to be undertaken in the context of the earlier crisis discussion would also inform outcomes undertaken under this agenda item. The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs underscored the contribution that full employment and decent work for all could make to the eradication of poverty. The Committee, as the principal body for system-wide coordination in the programme area, provided a well-established forum to support the coherent development and implementation of an effective programme of action to ensure measurable results.

46. The note contained a proposal for the Committee to develop a coordinated, substantive and coherent system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication and full employment and decent work, which met with wide support from the Committee. To facilitate this process, it was suggested that the Committee establish a time-bound cluster group of five to seven members. Given the broad expression of interest by organizations in participating in this group, representation as broad and inclusive as possible was recommended.

47. **The High-level Committee agreed to establish a time-bound cluster group of Committee members, led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ILO, to prepare a draft action plan for review at the next Committee meeting.**

## VI. The United Nations system’s contribution to the Economic and Social Council

48. The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs introduced a note on the engagement of the United Nations system in the work of the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council, underscoring that the changes that the Council had undergone as outlined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome and General Assembly resolution 61/16 provided a unique opportunity for CEB members to reinvigorate their engagement with it. He hoped to build upon the discussion that the High-level Committee had had at its thirteenth session, in which the need to define approaches and develop modalities to engage United Nations system agencies in a real dialogue with the Council had been stressed. In this regard, he drew attention to the central role of the coordination segment as the main forum for a meaningful dialogue between the Council and CEB member organizations on the role of the system in implementing resolutions of the Economic and Social Council.

49. The note articulated a number of proposals for strengthening CEB engagement with the coordination segment, including incorporating consideration of the CEB annual overview report in that segment, ensuring that the report addressed the

themes of the coordination segment, including a standing item on the theme of the coordination segment on the agenda of the Committee at its fall sessions, and encouraging greater participation of executive heads in coordination segment debates.

50. While the agenda for the 2009 coordination segment was still being finalized, the tentative thinking was that it would start on 10 July 2009, with a presentation of the CEB annual overview report. It was further envisaged that two panel discussions would be held on the themes “The United Nations system’s role in sustainable development” — which would highlight the food and energy crises and climate change — and “The impact of the current financial crisis on sustainable development, including its social consequences”. Those were issues that were already very much on the agenda of the Committee. By building an interface with the intergovernmental processes, it was hoped that the United Nations system could be brought closer to the work of the Economic and Social Council and, in particular, its coordination segment.

51. Members of the Committee welcomed the paper and expressed their support for the principle of enhanced coordination between CEB and the Economic and Social Council. There was a range of views concerning the feasibility of the recommendations, however, in particular with regard to a possible linkage of the annual overview report and the predetermined themes of the Council’s coordination segment. Some members considered that that would risk constraining the CEB agenda and inhibiting the Board’s ability to respond effectively to emerging issues, such as had been the case with the CEB response to the food crisis.

52. It was suggested that, in order to improve interaction between CEB and the Economic and Social Council, consideration be paid to enhancing the level of participation in the Council’s coordination segment, and thus the possibility of convening a high-level coordination segment was raised, which might make participation more attractive for executive heads. Other suggestions from Committee members included linking the coordination and operational segments of the Council, thereby creating a locus for the coordination of operational activities.

53. In summing up the discussion, the Chairman noted that there was insufficient support in the Committee to approve the recommendations in paragraph 4 of the paper as currently set out. **The Secretary of CEB was therefore requested to lead a joint review by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the CEB secretariat of the proposals to take account of the concerns expressed by members of the Committee. As part of the review, the Department was also requested to contemplate measures to raise the level of participation in the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council.**

## **VII. Implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review (General Assembly resolution 62/208)**

54. In introducing the note on this item, the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs informed the Committee that the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 63/232, had decided to shift from a triennial to a quadrennial cycle for its comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development. The next review would thus be held in 2012. The political backdrop for that decision

was the concern to better synchronize the timing of the preparation of the strategic plans of United Nations system organizations with the comprehensive policy review. The General Assembly had accordingly asked the organizations of the system to align their planning cycles with the comprehensive policy review. The various governing bodies would need to follow up on the resolution, as indicated in a letter from the Deputy Secretary-General to executive heads.

55. He added that, with the change in the reporting cycle, the Economic and Social Council would have an even more important role in promoting and reviewing the implementation of the comprehensive policy review. Member States had requested seven reports, in addition to the reports of executive boards and heads of funds and programmes, for consideration at the forthcoming session of the Council, which called for the support and input of United Nations system organizations.

56. With respect to the progress report on the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review (General Assembly resolution 62/208), the Committee, together with the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group, had been assigned a number of actions in the matrix attached to the management process (see E/2008/49, annex). The High-level Committee on Programmes was now required to report on its progress and plans with respect to a review of how the United Nations system could best respond to capacity-development challenges in science and technology, including those identified at the 2005 World Summit and the World Summit on the Information Society. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs was prepared to make a modest contribution to such a review through the commissioning of a study of United Nations system activities in that area. The Committee was also expected to contribute to a joint exercise with the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group in formulating a system-wide policy and strategy on knowledge management. Finally, the High-level Committee on Programmes was requested to continue its efforts to achieve system-wide coherence in meeting the internationally agreed development goals by developing system-wide approaches and recommendations for enhanced coherence in specific programme areas.

57. The representative of UNCTAD introduced a proposal on enhancing access to new and emerging technologies. Although the note had suggested a new arrangement for carrying forward the Committee's responsibilities in the area of science and technology, further to additional consultations, UNCTAD, together with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UNESCO, now wished to propose that the scope of the work to be carried out as indicated in the note should be encompassed by the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS). In this connection, it was recalled that CEB, at its first regular session in 2006, had endorsed UNGIS as a new inter-agency mechanism with the main objective of coordinating substantive and policy issues related to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. To that end, it was anticipated that the terms of reference of UNGIS would be broadened at its next meeting, scheduled to take place during the week of 18 May in Geneva, in tandem with the World Summit on the Information Society Forum.

**58. The Committee thanked the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD for their presentation and contribution to its work in the area of science and technology. It endorsed the proposal to amend and expand the**

terms of reference of the United Nations Group on the Information Society, with a view to making science and technology a prominent feature, under the joint leadership of ITU, UNCTAD and UNESCO. It would, at its next session, review a report by UNGIS containing recommendations on how the United Nations system might best respond to resolution 62/208 with regard to strengthening its role in facilitating access by developing countries to new and emerging technologies, as well as to mainstreaming science and technology, including information and communications technology, in national development or poverty reduction strategies, in accordance with the priorities of countries.

## **VIII. Outcome of the CEB review and strengthening of the CEB secretariat**

59. Under this agenda item, the Committee had before it a note by the CEB secretariat on the Secretary-General's proposal on the functions, structure and budget of the integrated CEB secretariat. The note had also been before the High-level Committee on Management at its seventeenth session, held in Rome on 24 and 25 February 2009.

60. The Director of the CEB secretariat informed the Committee that consultations were still required in the light of the United Nations biennial budget and that, therefore, the budgetary considerations of the proposal had not been concluded in the High-level Committee on Management.

**61. The High-level Committee on Programmes agreed to postpone consideration of the agenda item pending further consultations.**

## **IX. Other matters**

62. Under this agenda item, the Committee was briefed by the representative of the United Nations System Staff College on the progress in the redesign of the United Nations leadership programme. The redesigned programme sought to be innovative and to bring leadership in the United Nations system beyond specific organizational issues, by taking a thematic approach to development. In this regard, the college was trying to gear itself towards becoming the centre of excellence for system-wide knowledge management, training and continuous learning that was envisaged in its statute.

63. In commenting on the recent developments, members of the Committee stressed the importance of making the United Nations leadership programme relevant. The need to develop a common United Nations culture was highlighted. It was further suggested that the leadership programme should focus on the training of resident coordinators and target mid-level managers at the P-4 and P-5 levels.

**64. The Committee took note for the record of the briefing by the representative of the United Nations System Staff College on the United Nations leadership programme.**

## **Annex I**

### **Agenda**

1. Adoption of the agenda and introductory remarks by the Chairman
2. The global financial crisis and its impact on the work of the United Nations system
3. Regional coherence
4. Climate change
5. Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)
6. The United Nations system's contribution to the Economic and Social Council
7. Implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review (General Assembly resolution 62/208)
8. Outcome of the CEB review and strengthening of the CEB secretariat
9. Other matters

## Annex II

### List of participants

Chairman: Juan Somavía (International Labour Organization)

Vice-Chairman: Mats Karlsson (World Bank)

Secretary: Phyllis Lee (CEB secretariat)

#### United Nations

Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Janos Pasztor
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Thomas Stelzer Kwame Sundaram Jomo Nikhil Seth
Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Jenty Kirsch-Wood
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	Marcia V. J. Kran Rio Hada Ulrik Halsteen

Regional Commissions	Noeleen Heyzer Amr Nour
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International Labour Organization	Maria Ducci Christophe Perrin Jane Stewart
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Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations	Annika Söder Sandra Aviles
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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Hans d'Orville
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World Health Organization	Namita Pradhan Peter J. Mertens
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World Bank	Ferid Belhaj Patrick G. Reichenmiller
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International Monetary Fund	Elliot Harris
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Universal Postal Union	Olivier Boussard
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International Telecommunication Union	Doreen Bogdan Béatrice Pluchon
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World Meteorological Organization	Elena Manaenkova
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International Maritime Organization	Monica Mbanefo
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World Intellectual Property Organization	Carlos Mazal Marcelo diPietro
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International Fund for Agricultural Development	Uday Abhyankar Timothy W. Page
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United National Industrial Development Organization	Agerico Lacanlale Richard Kennedy Qazi Shaukat Fareed
International Atomic Energy Agency	Ronald Sturm
World Trade Organization	Gabrielle Marceau Said El Hachimi
World Tourism Organization	Eugenio Yunis
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Taffere Tesfachew Mongi Hamdi Lucas Assunção
United Nations Development Programme	Bruce Jenks Alison Drayton
United Nations Environment Programme	Juanita Castaño Fulai Sheng
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Arnauld Akodjenou Salvatore Ippolito
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Robert Styrk
United Nations Children's Fund	Cecilia Lotse
United Nations Population Fund	Mabingue Ngom Ronny Lindström
World Food Programme	Paul Larsen
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Ugi Zvekic
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Axumite Gebre-Egziabher
United Nations University	Virginie Aimard
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Alexander Kmentt
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Halldor Thorgeirsson
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Al hadj Af Sy Emilia Timpo
United Nations System Staff College	Jafar Javan
Development Operations Coordination Office	Debbie Landey Lubna Baqi
United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination secretariat	Adnan Amin (Director) Georgios Kostakos Mikael Rosengren

## Annex III

### United Nations system joint crisis initiatives

<i>Joint initiative</i>	<i>Lead agencies</i>	<i>Cooperating agencies</i>
1. A social protection floor: ensuring access to basic social services, empowerment and protection of people, in particular the poor and the most vulnerable	World Health Organization, International Labour Organization	World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, World Food Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Monetary Fund, regional commissions, World Meteorological Organization
2. Food security: ongoing High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis	United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Programme, International Fund for Agricultural Development	All organizations within the Task Force
3. Aid and finance for trade: boosting the aid-for-trade initiative and creating a liquidity pool for trade	World Trade Organization (liquidity), World Trade Organization/United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (aid-for-trade)	United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Bank

<i>Joint initiative</i>	<i>Lead agencies</i>	<i>Cooperating agencies</i>
4. Green Economy Initiative: focusing the ongoing initiative on the environmental dimension of stimulus packages, counter-cyclical measures and general policy responses	United Nations Environment Programme	United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Health Organization, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), World Food Programme, regional commissions, World Intellectual Property Organization
5. A global jobs pact: employment, investment, innovation, production and aggregate demand	International Labour Organization	World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, International Telecommunication Union, World Intellectual Property Organization, regional commissions, United Nations World Tourism Organization, Universal Postal Union, United Nations Population Fund
6. Emergency action for protecting lives and livelihoods and addressing hunger and humanitarian needs, security and social stability in connection with the crisis	World Food Programme	International Atomic Energy Agency, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, United Nations Children's Fund, World Meteorological Organization, World Health Organization, United Nations Population Fund

<i>Joint initiative</i>	<i>Lead agencies</i>	<i>Cooperating agencies</i>
7. Initiatives and advocacy for securing effective and additional financing for the most vulnerable to address the immediate effects of the crisis, e.g., vulnerability funds	United Nations Development Programme, World Bank	All relevant agencies, primarily those with field presence in vulnerable countries
8. An integrated monitoring and analysis system consolidating diverse statistical and monitoring outputs of CEB member organizations	Department of Economic and Social Affairs	All agencies
9. Innovating the way out of the financial and economic crisis	World Intellectual Property Organization, International Telecommunication Union, United Nations Industrial Development Organization	All interested agencies
10. Task team (High-level Committee on Programmes/United Nations Development Group): coordinating the translation of policy coherence to country-level implementation	High-level Committee on Programmes/ United Nations Development Group	

**Objectives of joint initiatives:**

- Contribution to discussion and decision-making in international bodies (General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, G-8, G-20, regional bodies) and in governance instances of programmes, funds and specialized agencies.
- Policy basis and convergence of tools for joint action at global, regional and country levels.

## Annex IV

### Way forward on climate change

A. **A common understanding on the way forward** regarding the CEB initiative could include the following elements:

- Move to a more substantive development phase, with conveners and working groups at the expert level taking ownership of the process, with flexibility to organize the work in their respective focus and cross-cutting areas with relevant agencies.
- The focus in each area should be on developing a small number of important, targeted collaborative programmes that respond to views articulated by Member States in the negotiation process and would have a significant impact.
- These collaborative programmes can be identified by the convening agencies and the respective area working groups, with advice from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, whose experts are conducting a review of implementation gaps in the various areas.
- Periodic updates on progress should be submitted to the High-level Committee on Programmes and CEB when required, with the substantive work finalized for presentation to CEB at its fall session through the High-level Committee in September. Coordination with the United Nations Development Group is required.
- The CEB secretariat will provide, within the limits of its resources, support for necessary reporting and coordination of the various outputs of thematic groups, as well as preparation of CEB/United Nations system products to be presented at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

B. To achieve the above, a **timetable** could include the following milestones leading to Copenhagen:

- Meeting/videoconference in March 2009 with convening agencies, the Convention secretariat, the CEB secretariat and representation from the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations Development Operation Coordination Office, as required in the light of Committee decisions to review collaborative programmes under way.
- Progress review by the High-level Committee on Policy working group and the United Nations Development Group Task Team in June 2009. Identification of product(s) to be presented to the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen. CEB secretariat to start preparing drafts in cooperation with convening agencies, as appropriate.
- Submission of draft report to the High-level Committee on Programmes at its September 2009 session. Also, submission to the United Nations Development Group, as appropriate. Decision on what product(s) will be presented on behalf of the system at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen.
- Endorsement by CEB at its fall 2009 session (October 2009) of product(s) to be presented on behalf of the system at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen.

Throughout this period:

- Informal videoconferences and/or e-mail exchanges can take place within each area group, as necessary, moderated by the respective conveners.
- Involvement of the Convention secretariat, the CEB secretariat and colleagues from the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations Development Operation Coordination Office, as appropriate.
- Informal consultations also to take place on the sidelines of Convention meetings.
- The practice of United Nations system thematic, rather than agency-owned side events, introduced in Poznan, to continue at future Convention meetings and, possibly, at other meetings.

It is imperative that convening agencies take full responsibility for the development of initiatives in their respective areas to ensure that, at its fall 2009 session, CEB will be presented with an ambitious, credible and implementable proposal for endorsement and subsequent submission to the Member States/parties to the Convention in Copenhagen.

C. At the High-level Committee on Programmes working group meeting in Poznan, it was also proposed that, at the overarching programmatic/policy level, the **High-level Committee may wish to focus its attention during 2009 on articulating, on behalf of the United Nations system, a broader vision of sustainable, climate-friendly economic growth.** Such a vision could encompass the narrative of sustainable and climate-resilient development, as well as elements of discussions on the financial crisis and food, water and energy security. **The High-level Committee may wish to consider appropriate modalities for the further development of the vision.**

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