Statement by Smt. K. Nandini, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of India to the UN Office at Geneva, at the General Debate of the Coordination Segment of the 2009 Substantive Session of the Economic and Social Council 10 July 2009, Geneva

Mr. President,

The current format of the coordination segment, where this segment follows-up on the Ministerial Declaration of the previous year, with particular focus on the role of the UN system in implementing the Declaration, has proved to be quite successful.

This format ensures that our deliberations in the high-level segment do not remain a one-time event, and that there is an appropriate follow-up mechanism.

In this context, we are happy to participate in today’s discussions on the implementation of the 2008 Ministerial Declaration, which took up the issue of sustainable development.

My delegation would like to thank the UN Secretariat for the detailed background reports that have been made available for our deliberations.

We also wish to associate ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. President,

The 2008 Ministerial Declaration clearly recognized the importance of an integrated approach to sustainable development, with emphasis on its three pillars of economic development, social development and environmental protection.

It is important that the UN system, in its efforts to assist developing countries pursue sustainable development, remains fully cognizant of this. We must remember that poverty eradication and development are overriding priorities for developing countries. The UN must strengthen its development assistance activities, and the international community must provide adequate resources to UN entities.
This is particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing economic crisis. This crisis threatens to reverse development gains made over the years. Abilities of developing countries to respond to the adverse social impacts of the crisis are sharply constrained by its negative fiscal impact. It is imperative that the UN system respond appropriately to assist developing countries. And ECOSOC must fulfill its mandated role of coordinating the activities of the various UN entities so that the UN’s response is comprehensive and holistic.

Mr. President,

Last year’s Ministerial Declaration identified a number of areas for specific action. These include energy, climate change, bio-diversity, desertification, agriculture, rural development, integrated water management, urban planning, food security, gender equality, among others. The various UN entities that are tasked with specific mandates in these areas must enhance their efforts to assist developing countries.

Further, there must be clear member-state involvement in and oversight of inter-agency mechanisms of the UN, particularly since their recommendations are proposed to be used as a guide for the activities of individual UN entities.

The Commission on Sustainable Development is the most appropriate forum to provide a holistic perspective on sustainable development. We would encourage different UN entities to more actively incorporate the guidance of the Commission in their work.

Technology has a crucial role to play in our efforts at sustainable development. It is important that the UN promotes transfer and dissemination of environmentally friendly technologies in developing countries.

We believe that Capacity building is another area where the UN should play a more active role.

Mr. President,

Climate change has emerged as a vital issue in our efforts at achieving sustainable development. We look forward to an ambitious and equitable outcome of the forthcoming Copenhagen Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC.

Insofar as the UN system is concerned, it must make greater efforts to assist developing countries in the areas of adaptation and technology. Efforts to assist developing countries must fully respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.
Before concluding, Mr. President, let me briefly touch upon the issue of integrated and coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of the major UN conferences. This is another important role that ECOSOC discharges.

In this context, we are concerned that future reports under this agenda item would no longer review how the UN system contributes to the integrated and coordinated follow-up. Instead, it has been proposed that future reports will focus on efforts countries themselves have made to promote integrated follow-up of conferences.

It may be noted that the current report has itself highlighted the close cooperation between ECOSOC and the Commission on the Status of Women. We believe that it is this approach that needs to be further promoted, particularly with funds and programmes, where the report notes a lack of success. National actions are adequately reviewed through the AMR. It would, therefore, be desirable not to reorient the report under this agenda item away from action taken by the UN system.

Thank you Mr. President.