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**Statement by Ambassador Dalius Šekuolis  
President of the Economic and Social Council**

In 2006 the Ministerial Declaration adopted at Economic and Social Council High-Level Segment unequivocally recognized that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are critical for achieving sustainable development and combating hunger, poverty and disease and should be the basis for the future work of the Council. Policy recommendations must, however, be translated into action: the Council's new mandate puts special emphasis on national-level implementation, which is in line with the focus of the new methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women.