



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe
President of ECOSOC**

**Opening of ECOSOC Special Event on Philanthropy
28 February 2011**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this special event of the Economic and Social Council on philanthropy and education. Today's meeting will inform the Council's Annual Ministerial Review in July on the internationally agreed goals and commitments on education.

Last February, the Council met with philanthropists with representatives from business and civil society and government to discuss ways to promote gender equality and empower women.

This time around we ask another question — how can the philanthropic community best promote access and quality in education?

Back in 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Development Goals, a set of ambitious, time-bound targets to better the lives of the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

As we approach the 2015 deadline, many targets remain unmet — universal primary education being one of them.

This is a huge problem for several reasons.

Education, we know, is the key to self-empowerment. Few tools are as powerful. We also know that education enables broad progress on other measures of human development, including all the other Millennium Development Goals.

Distinguished guests,

Getting all children into classrooms is critical, but so is ensuring they leave equipped with the skills and knowledge demanded by employers. If reaching the marginalized will require far more investment, how is quality to be improved?

Innovation must play a central role: fresh, original thinking encouraged, best practices shared (at forums such as this) and information and communications technology embraced. Expect to see more public-private partnerships too, where the expertise and efficiency of the private sector can be made to work for social ends.

Philanthropy's role as a source of funding, know-how and inspiration means it can accomplish big things as well — it already has, in fact, and I fully expect it to continue doing so.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Effectively dealing with these global education challenges requires mustering effective teamwork, one of ECOSOC's special strengths.

Yet teams also need leaders.

The private sector can use its ingenuity to tackle old problems in new ways. It can invest in innovative approaches to educational and vocational training, better preparing youngsters for the world of work. And corporations bring their considerable marketing, logistical, research and management expertise to bear as well.

Philanthropy should continue to do what it does best — helping the marginalized and vulnerable catch up, while not shying away from risk either.

And the United Nations, along with governments everywhere, must better coordinate and monitor — ensuring progress marches forward in an effective and meaningful way.

I believe ECOSOC's special ability to bring together an extraordinarily diverse set of stakeholders is a real asset too.

Today, as we focus on expanding access and improving quality in education for millions across the world, let us not forget that the best teams are always greater than the sum of their parts.

Again, it's a pleasure to welcome all of you and I hope that you will leave this great hall inspired and motivated to help reach those who are waking up today without the prospect of going to school or to having a decent job.

I thank you.

Now, it's with great pleasure, that I welcome the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. Mr. Secretary General, your personal commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including those related to education, is unquestioned and so is your support of the Economic and Social Council.

For this reason, the Council is honoured that you have agreed to deliver the Opening Address to Members of the Council and its Guests.

You have the floor, Mr. Secretary General.