

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**Remarks by
His Excellency Martin Sajdik
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**ECOSOC hand-over
United Nations Headquarters, New York
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Excellencies,
Members of the Bureau,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today I stand before the Council, in the tradition of my distinguished predecessors. I am deeply humbled and indeed honored. I am thankful for the trust and confidence that the Council has placed upon me, as President of the Economic and Social Council.

I would like to congratulate the newly elected bureau. I look forward to working closely with each of you to enable the Council to deliver on its promise of promoting "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development" as enshrined in article 55 of the UN Charter.

I must give special thanks to my predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Nestor Osorio, and to my co- Bureau members, the Excellencies Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman of Sudan, Masood Khan of Pakistan and Ferit Hoxha of Albania. I really enjoyed working with them.

Ambassador Osorio's vision, magnificently pursued and expertly implemented, bore the many distinct marks of strong leadership. He has secured his legacy as a reformer who has placed the Council as a platform for unified dialogue on sustainable and inclusive development.

Indeed, I intend to continue and build on these themes throughout my Presidency. We must maintain the momentum from Rio+20 and its follow-up, and translate this into a meaningful Post-2015 development agenda, with sustainable development goals that respect the 1992 Rio principles. At the same time, we cannot divert our efforts from the achievement of the MDGs.

The Millennium Development Goals have given development a human face by capturing the attention of the shapers and doers, thus entering the public consciousness. Their simplicity, measurability, and time-bound nature, made the agenda both attractive and accessible.

With this marked success, we must persist and make a common final push to achieve the MDG targets. We must reflect on the lessons learnt through the MDG's, and weave them into our thinking and actions going forward.

The outgoing ECOSOC Bureau has laid the groundwork for a fruitful dialogue on the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review theme:

“Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining gains in the future”

This theme mandates ECOSOC to build an action-orientated agenda for;

- Addressing the continuing and emerging challenges in our pursuit of poverty eradication;
- Ensuring the health of our planet;
- and
- Engaging all stakeholders to achieve results.

In my view, we have established the institutional framework and laid out a roadmap for these discussions to take place, this year and beyond, giving life to the ECOSOC strengthening decision.

I would like to convey my profound appreciation to my esteemed colleagues, the Excellencies Benedicte Frankinet of Belgium and George Talbot of Guyana for so skillfully steering the work to successful conclusion.

This year's ECOSOC calendar is necessarily busy, a position that indicates both the scale of the challenges and our collective resolve to surmount them.

The adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/1, on the strengthening of ECOSOC, concluded nine months of intensive consultations.

It recognized ECOSOC's substantive leadership of the UN system through selection of an annual theme. The High-level Political Forum has been established to meet under the auspices of ECOSOC. We have created an Integration Segment to monitor and promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, throughout the work of the ECOSOC system.

ECOSOC's responsibility for convening the HLPF, coupled with its original mandate for setting the dialogue and agenda, puts it at the heart of sustainable development. The Economic and Social Council is the platform for collective action to accelerate the achievement of MDGs and to shape the future development agenda. This Charter body has the whole UN system behind it. It has the authority to convene and it should be used to its fullest. The HLPF should use this Charter authority which is to its benefit.

I believe that the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC will serve a central platform for engaging decision makers from key policy areas. It should also serve as the platform for monitoring progress in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Excellencies,

As we move forward in this new cycle, my aim is to bring the Council together in this transition period in cementing a reform process that began with the implementation of resolution 61/16 and its review. This transition process has gifted a unique 18-month stewardship, which I hope that we will collectively use to chart the way for an ambitious Post-2015 agenda.

Articulating a new UN development agenda will consume much of our attention in this period. Particularly, I propose to focus the Council's actions on:

- Shaping our policy recommendations with the objective of a more rigorous and facts based approach to impacting and measuring progress.
- Multi-stakeholder Platform:

building upon ECOSOC's role as a multi-stakeholder platform to create a participatory approach that engages and deepens the role of civil society, academia, Non-Governmental Organizations, and private sector representatives as partners in development. I believe that these partners should be provided with more opportunities to engage with us. I would like to work with Member States in finding ways to deepening and broadening their engagement with the Council and HLPF. We should be more open and creative.
- Youth:
There is no doubt that Youth holds the key to the realization of the future we want. They are the future. No opportunity should be missed in addressing the challenges of young people.
- Enhancing ECOSOC's role in development cooperation:
In going beyond traditional North-South thinking we should ensure that ODA flows are indeed used as catalysts. Donor and recipient nations alike are to hold each other to account as partners. The Development Cooperation Forum has all the necessary characteristics to serve as the place of global mutual accountability.
- Harmonizing the work of the ECOSOC system:
our new institutional framework recognizes that development is intrinsically interconnected. Our future impact will be amplified by acting upon a unified and common agenda.

And last, but not least

- Prioritizing the needs of countries in special situations, particularly Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing States. Countries emerging from conflict require the dedicated attention, resources and guidance of this body.

Our agenda will be ambitious, so as to surmount the scale of global challenges we face. We must be innovative in our thought leadership and relentless in our pursuit of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Allow me to add this in my national capacity, all of these issues coincide with the priorities and goals of my country, Austria, for the period lying ahead of us. These include the Rule of Law, specifically the fight against corruption, Human Rights, climate change, sustainable energy and full and productive employment, especially of the young. For having put the latter topic at the center of ECOSOC's deliberations in 2012, I want to express my special appreciation to my esteemed predecessor, the present State Secretary for Defense of Slovakia, Milos Koterec.

For ECOSOC and the United Nations to make a positive difference, the Council must adapt to the rapidly changing conditions and rise to the level of our Charter mandate. The undertaking is enormous, but we, the Economic and Social Council, must find the courage to deliver on it.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are promising prospects for ECOSOC and the UN as a whole. The potential for breaking new ground is there but only if we set our eyes on higher goals of achieving higher standards of living for all. If we fail to do so then there are serious risks that we will get lost in the trivial pursuits. Not only that, we may do irreparable damage to these institutions.

I urge you to make these reforms work for the betterment. It is in your hands and I am here to serve you to the best of my capacity.

The work of our UN system partners will be crucial in this respect. I give special recognition to the Secretary General for his leadership and the support provided by Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under Secretary-General of UNDESA and look forward to strengthening and scaling up the cooperation between us.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand here today ready to address the tasks that have been entrusted to me with the greatest level of commitment and in a true spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. I will count on your support in continuing to build the future we want.

Thank you.