

Deputy-Secretary-General's opening remarks at the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission for  
Social Development

Conference Room 4, United Nations Headquarters, New York  
Monday, 29 January 2018, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Your Excellency, Mr. Nikulás Hannigan, Chair of the Bureau of the Commission for Social  
Development,

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to participate in this 56<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development  
and I find the theme of this year's session - "Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve  
sustainable development for all" - particularly timely as we seek bold and transformative  
actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Distinguished delegates,

It is three years since world leaders adopted the transformative 2030 Agenda for  
Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is also twenty-three years since world leaders adopted the Copenhagen Declaration and  
Programme of Action at the World Summit for Social Development.

The 2030 Agenda builds on the World Summit for Social Development and the progress  
achieved under the Millennium Development Goals.

A lot of has happened since the World Summit for Social Development.

National development policies continue to place people and planet at the center of  
development.

They are also responding more effectively to global crises and new emerging challenges.

At the global level, we have experienced impressive reductions in extreme poverty.

Significant progress has also been made in improving access to schooling and healthcare,  
promoting the empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and  
indigenous populations.

However, the drop in extreme poverty remains uneven across regions, within countries and  
between various social groups.

Of concern are the persistently high levels of poverty and deprivation among women and  
children, indigenous groups, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

Further, inequality between and within countries remains high and has worsened in some cases.

Levels of unemployment and underemployment also remain high among youth, while poor job quality remains a pressing issue for workers, especially for women who earn lower wages and have higher risk of being in vulnerable employment.

Less than one-third of the world's population have adequate social security coverage and more than half lack any coverage at all.

These are the social development challenges that this Commission is seized with.

I am confident that the deliberations of this Commission will lead to social policies that are inclusive, just and fair.

It is imperative that we promote social policies that ensure that the benefits of globalization and economic growth are shared by all and lift all boats.

To achieve the vision of the 2030 Agenda, the Commission should emphasize the imperative of accelerating sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, including full, productive employment and decent work for all.

Progress in these areas will contribute to reducing inequalities within and among countries.

The overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty requires that all countries promote the empowerment of people living in poverty and in vulnerable situations.

The empowerment and participation of women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons is critical to achieving the SDGs and ensuring that development processes and outcomes are inclusive and sustainable.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The work of this Commission should contribute to accelerating the UN system's alignment to the 2030 Agenda, focusing on concrete actions that will enhance better delivery at the country level.

Your work should support the Secretary-General's efforts repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda if we are to deliver on our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet.

The Commission should continue to remain a vibrant space for inclusive social development exchanges, particularly for country experiences and challenges faced in implementing the 2030 Agenda, raising awareness, and mobilizing action at all levels.

Given the experience of the Commission in following up the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development, I am confident that this Commission will be up to the task.

Distinguished Delegates,

I am also aware that this year, the Commission for Social Development will adopt a resolution on its Methods of Work. This is a very important resolution as it gives the Commission its identity.

While following up the review and implementation of the World Summit for Social Development remains central to your work, I encourage you to be creative and to find ways to prioritize accelerating action to achieve the 2030 Agenda and to support the work of the High Level Political Forum.

The Secretary-General and I look forward to the outcomes of this session and to continue to work with you in ensuring that we reach those left furthest behind.

Thank you.

\*\*\*\*\*