

Statement by  
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at the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee for Development Policy

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Excellencies,  
Distinguished Members of the CDP,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here with you today and to welcome you all to the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee for Development Policy.

Regrettably, we have not had a chance to interact in the past. But today we have the opportunity to do so. This is very timely, considering my responsibilities as Assistant Secretary-General for policy coordination and inter-agency affairs. The outcome of triennial review of the LDCs, your recommendations on smooth transition, your inputs for this year AMR and your views on the post-2015 development framework will likely have implications for the work of the UN system as a whole. And we need to approach these issues in a coherent and coordinated way in order to continue to improve the organization's effectiveness in addressing global challenges.

In this respect, I would like to bring to your attention to two initiatives being currently undertaken at DESA. They will likely have a bearing on your work and to which, I hope, we can contribute.

One of such initiatives refers to sustainable development. As you may know, the Secretary-General of the UN, appointed Mr. Sha— as the Secretary-General of the upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). World leaders, representatives of the private sector, NGOs and experts will gather in Rio de Janeiro in June this year to secure a sustainable future for mankind. DESA, led by Mr. Sha, is in the centre of intense preparations. We are working hard with the objective of identifying and delivering concrete actions, not empty words, to move faster the sustainable development agenda.

The “zero” draft of the outcome documents is now available. It seeks to secure political commitments at the highest level of government and among all other stakeholders. The draft contains a road map for the green economy, a proposed sustainable development council and the strengthening of UNEP, among other things.

It also calls for the launching of a process to devise a set of global sustainable development goals (SDGs). It is not clear yet how these goals will be defined or which particular areas they will address. But clearly, lessons learnt in goal setting in the MDG framework—some of which you identified and will be discussing this week—will need to be taken into account.

By the same token, Rio will have a profound impact on the post-2015 development agenda. It will undoubtedly frame the discussions on the design of the UN development agenda for post-2015. In fact, sustainable development and its three dimensions –social, environmental and economic—need to figure at the centre of that agenda.

This takes me to the other initiative to which DESA is deeply committed: the post 2015 development framework. As you know, the Secretary General established a UN Task Team to support his efforts to advance the post-2015 agenda. He asked Mr. Sha and Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP, to lead the Task Team. Mr. Rob Vos and his team provide substantive supports to their work.

I understand that Rob will brief you on the UN preparations and on DESA's role. He will also explore how we can better explore the synergies between your work and the work being done at DESA on this very important undertaking. In fact, I am encouraged to see that, already last year, the CDP had started its work on the post-2015 agenda and had important discussions on this issue. I expect this plenary meeting will further advance your conclusions and sharpen your recommendations. Your advice to ECOSOC will be a valuable input to the UN system-wide work on the agenda and enrich its analysis.

Let me just recall that the MDGs have been fundamental in focusing attention and in galvanizing efforts around the common goal of eradicating poverty. They have guided development strategies and rallied donor countries around the goals. Efforts have paid off.

Recently, the World Bank announced that the extreme poverty rate, defined by the \$1.25 a day, had fallen to under-half of its 1990 value in 2010. That is, the very first target of the MDGs of halving extreme poverty from its 1990 value has been achieved before the 2015 deadline. Certainly this is fantastic news.

But we are not there yet; this achievement marks only half of the way on the road towards the eradication of poverty. Also, we are all acutely aware that there are massive differences in countries performances and unacceptable inequalities within and across countries. Moreover, the global community has been experiencing new development challenges as well as old ones. Climate change, increasing scarcity of freshwater, unsustainable urbanization, food security –to name a few—are among the emerging trends we need to address. The post-2015 agenda must rise to the new challenges as well.

And how can we ensure that the fight against poverty is sustainable in view of increasing unemployment, particularly among the youth?

The economic crisis in 2007-2008 has left a mark on labour markets in developed and developing countries alike. The number of the unemployed in the world increased to 200 million in 2011. Even when employed, about a half of workers are estimated to be in vulnerable employment. Pro-employment, pro-poor and inclusive growth is needed to generate sufficient employment opportunities for all and to sustain progress achieved in the poverty front.

We need fresh ideas and effective approaches. What policies are effective to generate decent employment opportunities for all? What institutional arrangements should a country have to find an optimal mix of policies and to implement these policies?

ECOSOC has chosen productive capacity and employment as the theme for the 2012 Annual Ministerial Review. The Council rightly recognizes the importance of strengthening productive capacity and increasing decent employment to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Your insights on these issues will be much needed contributions to this year's AMR.

Let me conclude with my sincere thanks to all of you for your work, your time and dedication. I understand that this year's plenary marks the last meeting for this current composition of CDP members. This has been a particularly productive group and your contributions for advancing the UN development agenda are greatly appreciated. For those of you completing your term by the end of this year, I hope we can continue to draw upon your expertise and count on your assistance in the future. Those of you being considered for another term, let me thank you also for your continued engagement with us. We will count on your expert knowledge and wisdom on old and new development challenges we face at present and in coming years.

I wish you every success in your deliberations in the next 5 days.

Thank you very much for your attention.