

Draft opening statement by H.E. Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba,
Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations
at the 14th Session of the Committee for Development Policy

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New York

Madame Chair of the Committee for Development Policy,
Assistant-Secretary-General for policy coordination and inter-agency affairs,
Distinguished Members of the CDP,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am most grateful for the invitation and I feel most honoured to open the 14th Plenary Session of this distinguished Committee.

The Economic and Social Council is fortunate to be able to count on your advice and expertise. You have provided most valuable insights to our discussions over the years. The appreciation for your work extends beyond the Council as the General Assembly has also relied upon you and requested your expertise on occasion. But, as the saying goes, “no good deed goes unpunished”. The increased recognition of your work has created additional demands on your time. In particular, I am aware that the General Assembly expects the CDP to play an important role in providing advice how to strengthen the smooth transition process for countries graduating from the list of LDCs. The Council has expressed the same expectation through its request to the CDP to assess the effectiveness of smooth transition measures. We are also looking forward to your views on how to enhance the effectiveness the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for the SIDS.

The contribution of the Committee to the LDC category is well established. Since its initial proposal on the criteria for defining LDCs in the late 1960s, the Committee has continuously refined the criteria for inclusion and graduation related to the LDC category. You have done so in a credible and rigorous way, such that I look forward with confidence to your recommendations following from the triennial review of LDC list that you will conduct during this week. Your recommendations in this regard will be a first benchmark after the Istanbul Conference, which—as you know—established ambitious goals, including that of reaching the target that at least half of the current list of LDCs should meet the graduation criteria for graduation in the coming ten years.

It goes without saying, that your expertise is not limited to LDC issues. At the Council we should make much more use of you insights. In this sense, I fully support Ambassador Koterec, the current president of the Council, in his efforts to strengthen our ties and organize more frequent interactions between us. By having more frequent dialogues, we hope to benefit more from your insights related to the themes of the high-level segment, including the Annual Ministerial Review. We will also seek your advice in setting our future programme of work. We passed a resolution to that effect last July, and I will be looking forward to meeting with some of you again in early April to discuss your views and insights on this year’s theme related to productive capacity and employment. We also expect to exchange ideas with you on the possible

contours of the post-2015 development agenda during the high level segment of the ECOSOC meeting in July.

I am pleased to see that the theme of the 2012, “Promoting productive capacity and employment in a socially responsive environment” is high on your agenda. We are confronting difficult challenges in this area. The world economy is not generating sufficient quality jobs. The high number of working poor remains worrisome in many countries. Youth unemployment is a major concern worldwide. In some countries it affects nearly half of young adult population. If we cannot give them a future, societies have no future.

Without jobs, men and women face greater uncertainty in their hopes of building a better future for themselves and their families. Their exclusion from the labour market tends to erode the fabric of society. Workers in many countries are also facing a deterioration of the quality of employment. Many, and their numbers are increasing, are only able to find jobs in the informal sector where pay is low, social protection is lacking and working conditions tend to be unsafe.

We need a stronger recovery of the world economy. And a greater focus of policies on job creation will also be needed for economic recovery itself. But this will not be enough. We need to ensure job opportunities for all and we need to improve the quality of employment being created to secure decent living conditions and to strengthen social cohesion. These are huge challenges. And, in the present world economic context, the issue concerns both developed and developing countries alike. I look forward to your analysis and recommendations on this policy challenge we face today.

Turning to “post-2015”, I hope ECOSOC will be able get ahead of the curve and serve as a forum for forming the consensus needed for the future development agenda. The MDG agenda has worked well in rallying global support for a human development-centered agenda. We will have to build on this accomplishment and this focus needs to remain at the core of the post-2015 agenda. However, the world has changed since 2000 and we are facing enormous challenges which did not seem as pressing at the time as they are today. The world population continues to increase at an unprecedented pace. Pressures on the natural environment are building up and, unless we change course, they will make livelihoods unsustainable in the coming decades.

We have seen a confluence of crises in recent years: a food security crisis, an energy security crisis, the global financial crisis as well as a brewing environmental crisis, as visible, for instance, in the increase in natural disasters. We are witnessing rising violence and insecurity in many parts of the world. The post-2015 development agenda should address all of these challenges and suggest credible approaches towards a secure, sustainable and inclusive pathway for global development. This is an enormous task and responsibility. The Council will need to rely on the advice of experts such as you to find the right answers. We are therefore most eager to see your recommendations in this regard.

You have a lot of hard work ahead of you and time is pressing. So, let me conclude with a special word appreciation. Your term as members of the CDP comes to an end

at the end of this year. Hence, if I am well informed, this will be the last time the Committee will have a plenary meeting in this composition.

In the coming months, the Council will be acting on the recommendations by the Secretary-General for the appointment of the members that will serve the CDP during 2013-2015. For those not serving another term, let me thank you most sincerely on behalf of the entire Council for your most valuable contributions over the past years as well as, of course, for the further contributions we are expecting from you this year.

I hope you remain engaged and we can continue to count on your assistance even after your term ends. The strength of the Council lies on the active involvement of its stakeholders, including independent development experts like you. Let me also thank those who will serve another term. Thank you for your continued engagement and we look forward to your advice in the coming years on how best address the development challenges the world is facing.

I wish you very fruitful deliberations over the coming days and I look forward to the Report you will submit to the Council. I trust it will be an excellent basis for our discussions and for the further dialogue we hope we can engage in with you in the coming months.

I thank you for your attention.