

**Introductory Remarks by****H.E. Mr. Sebastiano Cardi, Chair of the Second Committee of the
General Assembly****Expert Group Meeting in Preparation for the 2015 and 2016
ECOSOC Cycles of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)****New York, 4 December 2014**

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here at the opening of this Expert Group Meeting in preparation for the 2015 and 2016 ECOSOC cycles.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for organizing this important event, and UN Women for hosting it at its premises.

It is also a great pleasure to see such a cross-section of participants engaged in this discussion. This is a clear indication that we all agree on the need to work together to promote a smooth transition from an MDG-based development agenda to one centered on the SDGs.

There is no doubt that the next couple of years will be critical to re-setting and re-aligning the work of the United Nations institutions. The broad scope of the post-2015 development agenda will demand as much. This is a necessary task to ensure that the Organization is prepared to effectively support its implementation.

The role of institutions will be central to generate the necessary synergies across relevant sectors and policy areas. Institutional coherence, in particular, would be essential to ensure the systematic application of mutually reinforcing policies and promote coherent and coordinated action across the board.

We should strive first and foremost to enhance institutional coherence within the organs of the United Nations. With regards to development, it would be especially important to strengthen institutional coherence between ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

A sustainable development agenda that is universal in scope will indeed present new levels of complexities and challenges. These will require the Council and the General Assembly to join efforts to handle them effectively.

Cognizant of this, in its resolutions 68/1 and 67/290, the General Assembly established a new institutional structure and working methods around the ECOSOC, the HLPF and the General Assembly to address sustainable development holistically.

Within this framework, I would like to emphasize the importance of strengthening the interaction between ECOSOC and the Second and Third Committees, to ensure greater rationalization and alignment in the way we execute our respective mandates.

This will be important not only to reduce potential duplication of efforts, but also, and especially, to ensure that our work is mutually reinforcing. Resolution 68/1, paragraph 29, mandates us to pursue this task.

As we wait for the inter-governmental process to follow its course on the new development agenda, it is imperative that we review existing institutional instruments and structures to ascertain that they are fit for purpose; and to determine what needs to change in order to ensure that they will be when the time comes.

The Second Committee is currently in the middle of this reflection as it continues its consideration of measures to enhance its working methods.

Much like ECOSOC, over the next two years, the Committee would need to rationalize and mainstream its work. In doing so, it must sharpen its focus and distinguish its complementary role under the new agenda.

A particularly important task in this regard would be to review and update the agenda items before the Committee to ensure that they reflect the vision underpinning the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.

This should include consideration of possible overlap between the work of the Committee and ECOSOC.

In my view, a key concern that should guide our efforts in this regard is the need to promote greater policy coherence in treating the broad range of issues within our respective mandates.

Our common goal should indeed be to ensure that these bodies don't act in isolation, but work in complementary and mutually reinforcing ways.

This would mean looking for synergies between issues and agenda items and filling gaps on different policy areas, so as to meet our shared objectives.

This approach would undoubtedly result in more powerful outcomes in the implementation process for all concerned.

As you start your work for the preparation of the next two cycles of ECOSOC, I appreciate the opportunity to interject this institutional perspective in your discussion and look forward to hearing your ideas.

I wish you a successful and productive meeting. Thank you.