

## **Opening Remarks by**

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### **Inter-regional Workshop Experiences and Lessons Learned from ECOSOC National Voluntary Presentations**

**Kingston, Jamaica, 2-4 December 2015**

Ms. Clare Bernand,  
Ms. Sharon Miller,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The presentations and discussion we had during the last two days have been very clear at recognizing the important contribution the MDGs made to development policies during the last 15 years.

The presentations made so far and follow up discussions have also confirmed the important contribution made by National Voluntary Presentations to the global development practice and thinking.

It has been countries making decisions about their own specific policies and strategies to implement their national development plans, including the Millennium Development Goals and other Internationally Agreed Development targets. In the words of Navid “By embracing a broad vision of development, the National Voluntary Presentations have deepened policy integration and enhanced coherence.”

The MDGs were not meant to be a development agenda, even less a universal one. Nevertheless, by setting specific goals, the MDGs

influenced development paths in many countries in different ways and to different degrees depending on countries own characteristics. Perhaps, the most important contribution of the MDGs was to ensure economic growth did not overlook human development and that development was conceived and pursued in a balanced way.

Over the years, UNDESA has been responding to countries requests for capacity development and technical assistance to address the challenges of national development aspirations and their blending with the MDGs and IADG. It has supported countries to build statistics –Ivo has shared with you the important work we are doing here, address social inclusion, manage forests, engage in institutional building, adopt and implement e-government programs.

Benefiting from the foresight of Navid, the focus of today's discussion turns to an area that does not always gets the headlines and is missed by media spot lights. We shall focus today on modelling tools, on quantitative modelling tools. And as we do that, we will also address the question of what institutional requirements countries need to effectively discuss and decide on the national priorities that give shape to national development plans.

On the MDGs, since the early 2000s, always at the requests of countries, UNDESA has been supporting countries building national capacities to use economic quantitative models to quantify the many impacts of increasing investments in human development. Human development, social inclusion --Clare Bernand and Sharon Miller know this very well, need a well-functioning economy. By building capacity on the use of modelling tools countries have been able to quantify the interrelations between macroeconomic variables and social development, as defined by the MDGs.

Being aware of these interrelations is very important, but to properly grasp them, one needs numbers and figures, and needs to be able to build a compelling story from them. We have been responding to national governments requesting support to take-on this important task. To inform policy decisions with systematic tools that can contribute to the consistency of a development narrative. These programs of capacity development have helped countries address questions such as:

- What is the impact of pursuing MDG policies on economic growth?
- What is the impact on the public budget deficits?
- How the exchange rate and foreign economic flows respond to different policies?
- What the employment impacts of natural shocks and, for example, MDG policies?
- How MDG based strategies impact peoples' income and consumption, poverty and inequality?

Today's discussions draw from the experience accumulated in almost 15 years of DESA capacity building programs responding to member states requests. The discussion will underscore the importance of quantification and systematic thinking when informing policy decisions.

The development task today, is much more complex than the task we had with the MDGs.

In that sense, it is now clear that growth based development is not enough. Even the more ambitious goal of broad based and balanced growth development is not enough. The environmental dimension needs to be fully integrated into development policy. The global

dimension intersects in many ways with the national and local dimensions, as climate change painfully reminds us.

Today, development comprises three deeply integrated dimensions: economic, social and environmental.

Most national development plans already include policies in all three dimensions of sustainable development; even if the word “sustainable development” is not explicitly mentioned.

Integration, at this level, is already a reality.

The natural and economic events, several associated with climate change, of the last ten years have made clear the importance of not overlooking the environment pillar of development and the importance of an integrated vision of development.

Today’s policy decision making needs to deal with a changing climate with increased frequency of extreme climate events, and the need to accelerate the transformation of national energy systems to a matrix based on renewable sources.

Countries need to halt and reverse environmental damage on key resources such as land and water.

And they have to grow faster, industrialize and redistribute.

Today’s policy decision making certainly needs quantification and systematic analysis.

In response to the complex challenges of the XXI Century and the need of Member States to quantify and systematically analyze this complexity to inform policy decisions, UNDESA is overhauling the economic modelling tools to improve understanding of:

- the economic impacts of policies aiming to change the energy matrix,
- the implications of policies aiming to cope with climate change
- the implications of policies seeking to expand social inclusion and inequalities

We are also adding quantitative modelling tools to inform medium and long term energy policies from a technology and cost based perspective. Deciding how much solar, hydro, geo-thermal, or wind is best to have in national energy systems or deciding on how to accelerate access to electricity and modern energy sources can be greatly assisted by a sound quantification of costs, trade-offs and synergies.

We are expanding our toolbox to address equality and social inclusion. We have done an important work in tracing the economic impacts revealed by our economic models to households to address poverty and inequality. We want to expand this to address at the level of households issues of water, energy and many other important indicators, and to link them with integrated assessment tools.

We need to work towards a quantified framework that gives consistency to integrated visions of development. We are developing tools that take into account, in one single methodology or framework, the physical and economic limits and interrelations of water, energy, land-use and climate. Agriculture policies need to be informed about potential limits of water availability; they also need to take into account the ways in which climate change can modify water availability. Energy policies need to be decided in conjunction with water policies, for water is a critical factor in many energy technologies.

As we do this, we strive to get a comprehensive and coherent view of the global, and the local, from the planetary dimensions to the details of geo-referenced information that technology gives us the luxury to have.

To tackle these challenges UNDESA is seeking the contributions from research institutions and development practitioners with the aims at developing modelling frameworks and methodologies that can be tapped with the minimum strings attached, extensively using open source codes and crowdsourcing. We seek to provide a continuously evolving package of modelling tools to inform development policy decisions.

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Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a follow-up to the rich discussions we had these two days on the MDG experience and the contributions made by the National Voluntary Presentations, I invite you to give your comments, inputs and recommendations on the role of quantitative modelling tools to inform development policy and on the examples of modelling tools that will be presented today.

I am confident we will have insightful and far-reaching discussions in this third day of the workshop. Your contributions and views will be crucial to improve the way we plan to work supporting national governments to take policy decisions in an integrated and coherent manner.

I look forward to a rich, engaging and frank dialogue.

Thank you.