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**Opening statement by  
H.E. Mr. Alejandro Palma Cerna,  
Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council**

**22 February 2016, New York**

**Briefing in the margin of the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment  
“Development Cooperation, integrating force for effective SDG implementation”**

Ambassador Frankinet,  
Ambassador Muhumuza,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this briefing on development cooperation as lever for integrated implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The adoption last year of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Means of Implementation have set the international community on an ambitious new trajectory.

This year, in 2016, we will be judged by our willingness to quickly adapt to the new standards we set, and by our efforts to lay a solid foundation for the successful achievement of the SDGs. The Economic and Social Council has a central role to play in this endeavour, and we will continue in the open and participatory spirit of the 2030 Agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What does the 2030 Agenda mean ?

For poor, vulnerable and often excluded communities, it means a sense of dignity. It means the security that investments in their future will not be undermined by economic down-turn, by outbreaks of violence, by disease, or by recurring environmental hazards.

For the policy maker, it means integrated, inclusive and responsive policies, guided by the voices of the world’s most vulnerable people –by their daily needs and aspirations for the future.

For Government agencies and service providers, it means working together through broad partnerships to employ comprehensive, context-specific and cost-effective solutions.

Let us take a moment to ask ourselves – How is my organisation or my Government going to change the way it works? How am I going to play my part and rise to the challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda?

Development cooperation can be the impetus for new ways of working and the driving force behind the Means of Implementation for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It has the potential to help turn the SDGs into a reality and to transform the lives of millions of people over the next 15 years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Development Cooperation Forum forms an integral part of ECOSOC's commitment to an inclusive and engaging global partnership for sustainable development.

The DCF examines trends and progress in development cooperation in a holistic manner, bringing together the full range of stakeholders. It provides a lively space for knowledge sharing and mutual learning.

Its work is closely linked to the efforts of ECOSOC and the General Assembly to guide the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The 2030 Agenda and the evolving development cooperation have profound implications for the UN development system, the top recipient of multilateral aid and the preferred partner for governments in implementing their development strategies.

The UN development system needs to make itself a better fit for supporting countries in achieving the SDGs. ECOSOC is engaged in an intensive dialogue on how to adapt the system's strategic orientation and operations against the 2030 Agenda, taking into account the emerging role and approach of development cooperation in different contexts.

The discussions and policy recommendations of the DCF will also contribute directly to the work of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Formulaic review exercises serve only those who favour the status quo. We need an honest and inclusive discussion based on evidence from your work and meaningful examples from the ground. Your active participation in the 2016 DCF is essential. You carry the voices of the direct beneficiaries.

I sincerely hope that you will all join us at the 2016 DCF in July to lay a solid foundation to build a life of dignity for all.

I thank you all for joining us here today and extend our appreciation as well to UNDESA, its Office for ECOSOC Support & Coordination and their many partners for their tireless efforts to support the preparations for the 2016 DCF.