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**Opening Statement by H.E. Mr. Léo Mérorès, Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations
and President of the Economic and Social Council**

**Global Preparatory Meeting
6 March 2008**

Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you at this important meeting. As we go into the second year of the ECOSOC with new mandates, and in particular formally holding the Development Cooperation Forum for the first time, today's meeting provides a valuable opportunity to provide inputs and share the expectations of the Council in the implementation of both of those "new" mandates: AMR and DCF.

We all witnessed last year the successful launch of AMR. The vibrant discussions that took place during the National Voluntary Presentations are still vivid in our minds. The evidence of the success can be seen from the fact that this year we have eight countries volunteering, including four developed countries. Moreover, we already have several volunteers for next year. Yes, there is enthusiasm and it was indeed refreshing to hear the real experience of countries in implementing their national development strategies. But has it made any difference in those countries situations? Have those obstacles that were reported been resolved or being attended? Have there been any steps taken to follow-up to these presentations? How do we keep these countries engaged with the Council's work?

AMR, especially the National Voluntary Presentation was not meant to be a "one time event". It should be the first step in a process to promote accountability in fulfilling the commitments and to assist accelerating the implementation of the United Nations Development Agenda. National Voluntary Presentations are meant to provide opportunities for countries to share their experience and consider ways to overcome the obstacles together as well as scale up their efforts to reach national goals. How can we ensure that this will happen?

Without adequate follow-up mechanisms including effective monitoring and evaluation, we will be left with a great deal of information but the Council would be less sure of the impact at the country level. In exploring the ways of enhancing the impact, the Council can also learn from reviews pursued in other for a like the African Union and OECD. While ECOSOC reviews are totally voluntary, it can still benefit from these organizations' work in this area. I hope the first panel this morning will give us ideas in how to make the AMR, in particular NVP, a more long-term and inclusive process for the countries sharing their experiences and those who are drawing the lessons from these experiences.

The second panel of this morning will focus on the theme of this year's AMR, "sustainable development" and consider how ECOSOC can facilitate strengthening and accelerating the implementation of relevant internationally agreed development goals. "Sustainable development" and the need to integrate its three pillars, namely economic, social and environmental pillars, are no longer a new concept. Yet, we seem to be still struggling to fully integrate them in our policies and make a big stride towards the goals of sustainable development. Indeed in the e-discussion that has been organized by UNDESA and UNDP, several key messages point to that effect. First, there is a need for greater policy coherence at global, regional and country level. Second, integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions remains a planning and operational challenge. In addition to integrating these horizontal sectoral dimensions, there is also a challenge of adjusting the different time horizons of key strategies, such as poverty reduction strategies, UN Development Assistance Framework and national sustainable development strategies. Third, capacity needs to be built both in developed and developing countries in making this full integration and advancing the agenda in real terms. I look towards the discussion of the second panel to assist the Council in focusing its deliberations in July and producing value-added outcomes.

I am sure we all agree that the revitalization of ECOSOC and the success of the AMR and the DCF are two sides of the same coin. One will not happen without the other. A genuine bellwether of ECOSOC's new prowess will therefore be the quality of the discussions as well as the influence of the first biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

Our goal should be to make this upcoming landmark event, *the* global venue for high-level policy-makers to discuss development cooperation issues of central concern to both developing and developed countries. It is therefore important that we discuss this afternoon what would constitute a successful DCF – in 2008 and looking further ahead.

The two key preparatory events that have taken place so far - the high-level symposiums in Vienna and Cairo - are instructive in how high-level policy dialogue can take place in an open, candid and interactive fashion among different stakeholder groups. It is in part because of these interesting and eye-opening dialogues that we are seeing the high expectations for the upcoming DCF. Expectations we have to meet if ECOSOC is to become a key forum in the global debate on international development cooperation.

This afternoon will provide us with an excellent opportunity to recap the discussions and outcomes of the symposiums in Vienna and Cairo. In addition to taking stock of where we stand, we will also look forward to the upcoming Forum. I will ask you to share your ideas for a vision as well as your expectations for the 2008 DCF and beyond; in particular keeping in mind the Monterrey Follow-up Conference by the end of the year and the Accra High-level Forum in September. We shall also hear on the expectations of multi-stakeholders of the DCF.

We have a busy day ahead. To assist us in preparing for this year's substantive session, we have the privilege of having with us today a number of distinguished panellists with longstanding experience in sustainable development and development cooperation. Without further ado, I would like to give the floor to the moderator of the morning session.