



Check against delivery

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Miloš Koterec
President, ECOSOC
Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the UN**

**Handover Ceremony
10 January 2012, New York**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me welcome you all back to the ECOSOC chamber after the holiday season and wish all of you a truly happy and prosperous New Year.

It is a great privilege and honour for me to assume this important office today. I am truly humbled by the confidence bestowed upon me and upon my country by the Group of Eastern European States that endorsed my candidature as well as by all the member states in today's elections. Let me also express my most sincere congratulations to the newly elected Bureau members and extend my warm welcome to all incoming members of this Council. My special word of appreciation goes to the outgoing members of ECOSOC, my former fellow bureau members as well as to the members of the Secretariat with whom I had such enriching work experience last year.

I would like to pay special tribute to my predecessor Ambassador Kapambwe, for his skillful stewardship of the Council this past year. I particularly welcome the new vision he brought in for ECOSOC — one which aims to strengthen its work and expand its influence.

Indeed, setting the global development agenda is a critical step towards this end. Making ECOSOC a truly meaningful organ that has the capacity to make a difference calls for new approach. This is so especially now, during times of hardened economic uncertainty that ECOSOC's role and relevance is ever-increasing.

Excellencies,

Allow me, to share with you few ideas and observation for our work in the year ahead:

Let me start with development cooperation. Here the landscape has changed beyond recognition. Gone is the old binary division where rich nations dispense aid and poor ones receive it. The reasons are many, though progress has much to do with it. Fewer countries are destitute and thus eligible for cheap loans. At the same time, two-thirds of the world's poorest people — now live in middle-income countries.

Likewise, traditional donors no longer dominate giving. Numerous new emerging donors and private sources have become as important as many donor governments — and particularly innovative.

While some nations escape the poverty-trap, many more desperately need help. In 2012, ECOSOC must therefore carve out its niche as the forum for frank, free-flowing discourse on development cooperation. Unburdened by the rigidities and entrenched power structures of older bodies, the Council's Development Cooperation Forum is ideally placed for the task. Still, many are unsatisfied with the DCF's infrequent biennial meetings and limited toolkit. Done properly, however, these perceived limitations could turn to strengths if ECOSOC cultivates itself as the place where fresh, game-changing ideas are incubated, new policies established and global partnerships formed.

How is the Council's other recent innovation — its Annual Ministerial Review — faring? Governments remain eager to share their development experiences. This summer, nine will take the stage to deliver National Voluntary Presentations: Algeria, Brazil, Ecuador, Kenya, Mauritius, Qatar, Russia, Senegal and Ukraine. And as ECOSOC expands its menu from Jobs in 2012 to Science, Technology and Culture in 2013, more interest is sure to follow.

Despite such success, resting on our laurels is not an option. How then can we make the AMR even better? Tweaking the format with, for example, “dual

presentations” might add excitement and stir-up debate. Encouraging more inclusive participation beyond government — such as with academia, foundations and corporations — also makes sense, as does revamping the current National Voluntary Presentations analytical framework to boost the quality and depth of reporting and analysis.

As we look ahead, two other themes will surely compete for the Council’s attention in 2012: sustainable development and the post-2015 development architecture. What have we learned from our past endeavors? At the last Rio summit, we dreamed big. This time around, ambitions may be more modest. If Rio+20 is to make the right impact, it must instead set its sights on changing the terms of debate — from neutralizing human influence on the planet to better managing and mitigating its impact. The institutional framework for addressing our many global environmental challenges is largely in place. Truly empowered ECOSOC. able to effectively fulfill its original mandate can significantly contribute to solving these challenges. I strongly believe that ECOSOC is well placed and well equipped to become the central place for follow-up to Rio+20. No other body, whether existing or new, has the wherewithal for integrating the economic, social and environmental pillars.

As for ECOSOC’s role in shaping the post-2015 development framework, influence again demands visionary thinking: setting, not following the agenda; retaining the best aspects of the Millennium Development Goals, like for example simplicity and time-bound targets while adopting a sharpened focus on outcomes and delivery. On this and all the other issues I have mentioned today, the Council is well positioned at the heart of the action.

ECOSOC has a role to play in the preparation for Rio+20 as well as in the post 2015 global development framework. In this interdependent world, we need to fully realize the potential of ECOSOC as its legitimacy, complementarity with other intergovernmental bodies and its system-wide reach on global scale, make it a naturally important actor in the system of global governance. I personally favor developing constructive dialogue with G-20 which can be conducive to our joint efforts for effective international cooperation and to our shared vision of ensuring economic and social well-being for all.

I am strongly convinced of ECOSOC’s worth in these efforts. As any other body, it needs to continuously work towards its improvement. In this regard, the last year’s review of the resolution 61/16 must continue. While improving its work, we could focus on improving the cooperation of ECOSOC with its expert bodies, to have better synergy and utilize more efficiently their valuable expertise. Equally, it is

important to strengthen its ties with the Bretton Woods Institutions, especially in turbulent times for the economic pillar of sustainable development. I am a true believer in the cooperation with the private sector and civil society who have become such assets to our work.

I would like to particularly stress the ECOSOC's indisputable comparative advantage in the system-wide joint efforts for integrated approach to peace and development. In this regard, I will also work towards furthering the cooperation of ECOSOC with Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council. Strengthening ECOSOC is not a one time event but a long process which I am determined to lead this year with true vigor and dedication.

Excellencies, Dear colleagues and friends,

We have an exciting year ahead of us. We embark on this upcoming session amidst growing expectations and renewed hopes for real progress in the area of social and economic development. This organ plays a crucial role in the pursuit of our ultimate goal of making the world a better place. To be entrusted with presiding over this important body in such challenging times fills me with great honour but also deep awe and responsibility in the face of the challenge of effectively addressing a diverse, extensive and important agenda. I shall approach this demanding task with maximum commitment, determination and utmost spirit of cooperation and respect. I intend to use my powers to seek common ground and work towards maximum possible convergence of our positions.

I thank you.