

**Special briefing session
United Nations Economic and Social Council**

“Interactive dialogue on the current economic and financial situation”

**Introductory remarks by H.E. Mr. Milos Koterec
President of ECOSOC**

7 February 2012

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to this “Interactive dialogue on the current economic and financial situation”, organized by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The past year has been marked by extreme volatility in financial markets and the global economy. A slow and fragile recovery from the global financial and economic crisis of 2008 and 2009 has further weakened pre-existing poor job growth. According to UNDESA, unemployment levels are high and growing across regions, especially among youth – from 2007 to 2009, global unemployment rose from 178 million to 205 million persons with youth unemployment at 13 percent globally.

Against this background, this interactive dialogue seeks to bring together distinguished economists, Member States and ECOSOC stakeholders, to foster greater understanding of the prevailing volatile economic and financial situation. Our panel of distinguished economists will present not only their views on the

structural and systemic challenges for today's economy, but also suggest possible policy responses to enable sustained growth and job-creation.

This meeting is one in a series of dialogues promoted by the ECOSOC Bureau, for which I am privileged to be President. As you may recall, in October last year, ECOSOC and the Second Committee of the General Assembly jointly organized a meeting on "The global economic situation and sovereign debt crisis." Sadly, this situation has not turned the corner since that meeting. The debt crisis in Europe and the instituting of austerity measures have led to even greater uncertainty, thus threatening global recovery. Many developing countries have experienced slower growth, as well as rising inflation. What started as a financial crisis now threatens to throw the world into a double-dip recession, with output growth slowing from 4 percent in 2010 to 2.8 percent in 2011.

Furthermore, with growing inequality within and among countries, it is my view that the current development model needs to be revisited. The 'job-less growth' phenomenon has aggravated unemployment, underemployment and vulnerable employment. Inadequate social protection systems in many developing countries further compound the way out of poverty, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Studies estimate that the global crisis has caused between 47 million and 84 million persons to fall into or remain trapped in poverty. Furthermore, prolonged unemployment affects medium-term growth prospects due to its impact on workers' income and skills. I believe that a more inclusive and

balanced growth strategy should be adopted in order to address these challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's panel will discuss precisely these issues, sharing their views and insights. The panellists will first share their views on unresolved structural risks and fragilities in the global economy. They will discuss alternative policies for enabling sustained, inclusive and equitable growth and job creation, based on their long-standing experience.

I trust that we will also receive their recommendations for how inter-governmental bodies, such as ECOSOC, can facilitate effective global policy coordination, and the role of the United Nations as a whole.

Our discussion provides an invaluable opportunity for all of us to gain insights on the current global economic and financial situation. I urge an open exchange of views that will help identify appropriate policy responses.

It is with great pleasure that I give the floor to Mr. Rob Vos, Director of the Development Policy and Analysis Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, who will moderate the panel discussion.

Thank you.