



Statement by

H.E. Ambassador Milos Koterec, President of ECOSOC

(Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, Vice-President of ECOSOC)

Introduction of the 2012 Report of ECOSOC

New York, 22 October 2012

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to introduce the 2012 report of the Economic and Social Council. The Council had a very busy, productive year and is already gearing up for a full calendar in 2013. Allow me to highlight some of the key achievements from 2012 as outlined in the Report.

ECOSOC has been at the forefront in recognizing that sustained economic growth is only possible if we protect and enhance human and environmental resources. This principle was highlighted throughout the Council's 2012 Annual Ministerial Review – or AMR – on the global jobs crisis

As the central UN body for policy dialogue on development issues, ECOSOC was able to leverage the perspectives and expertise of various actors critical to creating decent work opportunities for all. This included over 40 ministers, top policymakers, eminent academics and global leaders from business and civil society.

Partnering with ILO and the wider UN system, the Council has pushed for an integrated, results-oriented approach to the job crisis. Specifically, it has recommended that collective efforts be focused on productive employment, green jobs -- especially for young people -- and social protection. These recommendations resulted in a comprehensive Ministerial Declaration which stressed the need for immediate, collective action to increase productivity and create good-quality jobs for the world's un- and under-employed.

As in past years, the 2012 AMR was built on a consultative process. National and regional perspectives on employment challenges were incorporated into the overall global review of the jobs crisis.

Through preparatory meetings in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean, key regional actors were closely consulted on issues ranging from productivity to small and medium enterprises to inclusive growth. These consultations were important platforms for sharing regional best practices and lessons learnt.

In addition, eight countries made National Voluntary Presentations to report on progress towards national development objectives, as well as on ongoing challenges to employment-related goals and targets.

Later in the High-level Segment, the Council's Development Cooperation Forum – or DCF – earned excellent reviews from participants, while benefiting from a record level of participation.

Indeed, the DCF has a growing list of successes to its name. It was only the Council's third Forum, but in this short time the DCF has made its mark on the development landscape as a critical space for policy discourse and technical guidance. Recent calls for development cooperation to become more inclusive will, no doubt, enhance its profile.

It is also worth noting the high quality and evidence-based nature of both discussions and substantive inputs throughout the DCF. We must strongly commit to deepening this approach within the Forum and throughout ECOSOC's work more generally.

The Coordination Segment reviewed the follow-up by the UN system to the Council's 2011 Ministerial Declaration on education. A special focus was placed on partnerships in the education sector among UN agencies, civil society and the private sector. The issue of skills mismatch with labour markets was also discussed in depth.

The Council also responded to a request by the General Assembly¹ to hold a special event on innovative mechanisms of financing for development. Key messages from participants underscored the need to consolidate global funds, scale up existing initiatives and introduce new mechanisms, such as green bonds.

The Operational Activities Segment fine-tuned preparations for the General Assembly's upcoming Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, of UN operational activities for development. There, the issues covered included:

- Assessing UN-system funding;
- Building better tools to improve coherence;
- Strengthening the resident coordinator system;
- And boosting the efficiency of business operations, among others.

From my perspective, this has provided a very solid analytical foundation to the GA's work this session on improving the UN development system.

Every year, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment shines the spotlight on the world's most complex emergencies and focuses on solutions for improving responses to future crises.

This year's Segment was notable for its emphasis on the transition from "relief" to "development", with a particular focus on the Sahel. There, many participants pointed to the need for continued flow of international aid resources above and beyond the immediate response needs. Specifically, development assistance in the region should encourage growth, promote stability, and advance shared prosperity for all.

At the General Segment, the Council took action on a wide range of complex issues using good-quality reports from its Functional and Regional Commissions, NGO and Tax Cooperation Committees, and various other expert and ad hoc bodies.

¹ Res 66/191 (22 December 2011)

Another important achievement was the adoption of the new System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women under the Council's annual consideration of gender mainstreaming.

On the LDCs, the Council paved the way for the follow-up to the Istanbul Programme of Action and endorsed the addition of the Republic of South Sudan and the graduation of Vanuatu. The Council strongly encourages the GA to act on these recommendations without delay.

Special attention was given to aid effectiveness and policy coherence in South Sudan and Haiti, with an emphasis on ensuring the countries' development partners were committed, transparent and accountable.

At the same time, the Council focused on ensuring its own partnerships continued to be strengthened by granting consultative status to 286 additional non-governmental organizations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ECOSOC needs to build on the achievements it has made in 2012 as it increasingly moves sustainable development to the centre of its agenda.

Following the commitments made at the Rio+20 Conference giving the responsibility for the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development to ECOSOC, the Council requested proposals from the Secretary-General on its strengthening, including its working methods. Specifically, this request asks for special attention to be given to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow up to major United Nations conferences and summits.

Proposals will be informed by contributions from Member States and the UN system at large. They will be considered in the context of the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 during the 67th session of the General Assembly.

The ECOSOC Bureau is grateful for the strong collaboration of Governments and UN system partners who supported these processes leading up to the 2012 Substantive Session. The Council looks forward to your continued engagement in 2013 as we work together to build the future we want.

Thank you.