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CLOSING STATEMENT

**H.E. Mr. Néstor Osorio,
President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

2013 AMR Regional Meeting for Africa

**Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
14 March 2013**

Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Under-Secretary-General Wu,
Deputy Director General Onyeama,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now come to the end of a very interesting and productive day. I would like to take this opportunity to express special thanks to our host, the Government of Tanzania and to our organizing partner, the World Intellectual Property Organization, for their support in making this meeting possible. My appreciation is also due to the Government of Japan for its support.

I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all panellists and participants. Without your active participation and engagement, it would not have been possible to have such a rich discussion.

And I also wish to thank all of you for your active participation. You have devoted your valuable time and energy to the success of this meeting, and it is much appreciated.

Distinguished Participants,

I will not attempt to synthesize all that was discussed today. But please allow me to share a few, broad messages from our discussions, which I will take with me back to New York:

- Today's discussions have reiterated the importance of innovation to further progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and in promoting the three pillars of sustainable development throughout Africa.

- The African continent has tremendous potential that must be fully realized in order to enhance the livelihoods of its peoples through culturally-sensitive sustainable development. Many countries, however, have very limited resources, which hinders their ability to tap into their innovative potential.
- Young people can be important innovators. Yet many young innovators in Africa, however, are not associated with institutions or universities. This presents a policy challenge to the promotion of inclusive innovation, as many services supporting innovation is provided to innovators with a higher education. At the same time, higher education is very important for science, technology and innovation in many other technical fields.
- The financing of innovation is important. Innovators need assured and easily accessible financing. Other diverse types of support are also important for innovators, such as a quality education that is relevant.
- Enhanced innovation in Africa can go a long way in overcoming some of the technological, social and economic challenges associated with the achievement of the MDGs and sustainable development. However, promoting and expanding systems which support innovation requires defining clear priorities and establishing well-defined policies and partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society.
- Science, technology and innovation, or STI, can play an important role for pursuing sustainable development within the context of sustainable development.

Our discussions today have also stressed, among other things, the central role of national and regional frameworks for innovation. These frameworks can become enablers for the achievement of the MDGs, the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development. The Ministerial Declaration to be adopted by ECOSOC should issue a strong call for the role of STI in this regard.

African countries also need support to build their innovation infrastructure and the capacity to create domestic technology solutions to local development challenges, as well as to support the transfer, adaptation and dissemination of technology. Commitments of support should emerge from the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review.

ECOSOC should maximize its potential as a platform for multiple international efforts to support African countries on STI capacity building. It should identify mechanisms for greater coordination among providers of STI assistance.

We can also deduce important insights from the several good practices found in the African region.

Among conditions needed for more effective national science, technology and innovation systems, I would like to highlight the importance of the following:

- Policy frameworks and institutional capacity that promote innovation to address needs in key sectors of the economy and contribute to sustainable development as part of an overall national innovation system (NIS);
- Financial, fiscal, and regulatory incentives, together with an adequate regime for intellectual property rights, that foster development and innovation; and
- Policy measures aimed at promoting collaboration and partnerships among a broad range of stakeholders in sharing the knowledge and lessons learned from innovation programmes.

The realities and challenges of countries in the African region vary widely with respect to the level of development and capabilities of actively promoting innovation.

Regional measures to facilitate the transfer of ideas can help build this capacity and help reduce current imbalances of innovation and development in the region. These measures can include fostering regional linkages and partnerships among different stakeholders to capitalize on cross-border cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our meeting today is part of a broader effort to forge a regional strategy to use science, technology and innovation to facilitate the wider promotion of innovation as a means to achieve the MDGs and sustainable development. We hope to build on this event at the global level to ensure stronger partnerships with this region to support an effective use of STI for sustainable development.

I therefore hope that you will remain engaged with the work of ECOSOC beyond this meeting. I also hope you will join us for the Annual Ministerial Review in July, in Geneva, and I look forward to seeing you again there.

Thank you.