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Opening address by  
H.E. Mr. Khaled Khiari, Vice President of ECOSOC  
on behalf of

H.E. Mr. MARTIN SAJDIK  
PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

2015 Annual Ministerial Review

*“Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the  
sustainable development goals: What it will take”*

Trusteeship Council Chamber

Wednesday, 8 July 2015, 4pm

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guest Speakers,  
Dear Delegates and Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend to all of you a warm welcome to the opening of the 2015 Annual Ministerial Review.

The President of the Economic and Social Council, Mr. Martin Sajdik, regrets very much that he was unable to be here at this time, due to other critical matters that he is attending to. It is my pleasure to deliver this statement on his behalf.

I thank all of you for being here today. We all know that a smooth transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the transformative post-2015 development agenda that will be critical for the future of global development.

But what does this mean for citizens around the world? What is their connection to the MDGs, or will be their relationship to this new agenda?

Let us look beyond words and numbers and recall that the MDGs are about people. One story that struck me has been of the people of Kuril, a shantytown in Bangladesh’s capital Dhaka.

The MDGs have empowered the local community, including its community leader Minara to make real changes in the life of its citizens. They have built sanitary facilities that have benefited everyone, in particular the children that suffered from diseases linked to poor sanitary conditions.

In the same community, people were identified who were most in need of a loan. One of them is Shubra, who was able to open up a small shop, acquire a mobile phone, grow her business and build a sustainable livelihood for herself and her children, enabling her to cover the cost of their education.

In rural Malawi, Nsadalira has been able to better protect her two-year old daughter Roda, with the help of community health workers trained by UNICEF, being provided with mosquito nets and vaccines. These are just two of the millions and millions of examples of people that have been directly impacted by the MDGs.

Distinguished Ministers,

I have raised the question, what, like the MDGs, the SDGs will mean in the future. The answer is simple: They mean change – tangible and real change that must improve people’s wellbeing and that of our planet.

The example of Minara and her community has also showed us how interconnected development outcomes are. An opportunity given to Shubra to open a business empowers her to cover the cost of education for her daughters. Building sanitary facilities improves the wellbeing of children and of everyone else.

Excellencies,

Looking ahead, let me stress that our task is no less difficult. In fact, poverty continues to be all too real in too many places across our planet. There are countless people just like Minara and Shubra who need the right conditions and circumstances to be empowered, to stand on their own feet, leaving the shackles of poverty behind.

It is these conditions we are committing to further build in the post-2015 era. In the phase of transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs we cannot lose sight of the importance of putting in place the enabling environment for people to thrive.

Sound policies, strong institutions and a respect for the rule of law are the building blocks for an enabling environment to foster many stories like those of Shubra and Nsadalira, on a larger scale.

Good leadership and resilient populations create conditions that enable change, transforming the lives of individuals and their communities across the globe.

This will also require more investment in our people. We have to move from billions to trillions. This upscaling can only be achieved through partnership. We must act together.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The experience of the MDGs has provided us a strong foundation on which to build the SDGs and the future we want. The next two days will be characterised by an intense discussion on how to successfully transition from the MDG to the SDG era.

I have highlighted sound policies and leadership, robust institutions and the rule of law as key deliverables we need to focus on as part of this process. The foundations we build today will provide the solid ground on which the post-2015 agenda will stand.

In managing the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, ECOSOC is well placed to provide policy guidance on how global challenges can be addressed and how sound policies can be translated into real life results.

The High-level segment of ECOSOC is a key venue for the global dialogue on sustainable development. It will provide substantive guidance through its annual theme, focusing on areas that require heightened attention.

The experience and lessons that we have accumulated collectively through the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review and its National Voluntary Presentations form a solid and invaluable foundation on which to construct the follow-up and review of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. During the past two weeks we have discussed those issues, among others, during the high level political forum under the auspices of ECOSOC.

I am encouraged that this year's AMR will include four National Voluntary Presentations. I commend and congratulate the Governments of Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Philippines and Zambia for participating in this year's reviews.

Each has selected Review countries to constructively reflect upon their national experiences. We look forward to insightful NVPs and discussions on Friday morning.

This year will also include a mandated review of implementation of the Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020. There will be a special session dedicated to this review, and the opportunities and challenges of LDCs in the transition will also be addressed in several other sessions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I invite all of you to engage in the dialogues of this 2015 Annual Ministerial Review.

Let us unite to identify the most innovative paths forward for managing the transition from the MDGs to the post-2015 development agenda, keeping in mind who we have committed to: the people of this world, each and every one of them, and planet Earth itself.

This period of transition is a vital part of what is to come. You may say: The future is now.

I look forward to fruitful deliberations over the coming days.

Thank you.