

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

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

WELCOMING REMARKS

SIDE EVENT OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ITALY TO THE UNITED NATIONS
“PRIVATE COMPANIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A WIN-WIN GAME”
NORTH LAWN BUILDING ROOM 7, 9 APRIL 2014

Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to this panel discussion entitled "Private Companies and Sustainable Development: a Win-Win Game".

In order to reduce poverty in our world and to meet the global challenges of the 21st century, all stakeholders have to engage. When it comes to promoting economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development, the private sector with its resources and its know-how plays a crucial role. Private companies not only generate growth and create jobs, but they also have an influence on people's wellbeing and an impact on the environment. This has also been realized by the international community. In fact, more and more frequently private companies are called on to act responsibly and to support an economy based on universal values that are geared to ensuring environmentally and socially compatible long-term growth in the future.

To that end, the Economic and Social Council has, since 2008, convened an annual Partnerships Forum which has brought together large numbers of senior private sector and foundation representatives to engage with governments on ways in which partnerships could be strengthened in support of sustainable development. The Forum provides an important

platform to facilitate a systematic dialogue and knowledge exchange, and most significantly, an opportunity for tapping into the vast potential that business offers for achieving sustainable development.

The Rio plus 20 outcome document acknowledges that the implementation of sustainable development will depend on active engagement of the private sector and in this respect recalls the importance of the United Nations Global Compact. The United Nations Global Compact, as the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, provides, indeed, a unique platform for companies and other stakeholders to signal their level of commitment to respect and support the universal principles and UN goals and global issues. I trust that UN intergovernmental bodies, such as the Economic and Social Council, can tap into the knowledge and experience of the Global Compact to facilitate business involvement in our decision-making process.

The approaching 2015 Millennium Development Goals deadline is a great opportunity to scale up responsible business actions and to align them with the new global development agenda, with the ultimate aim of better enabling the private sector to contribute to the goals of this agenda.

Allow me to conclude with a quotation from the Secretary General's foreword to the 2013 Global Corporate Sustainability Report: "We cannot achieve a more equitable, prosperous and sustainable future without business engagement and solutions." With this, I wish you a fruitful discussion.

Thank you.