

UNITED NATIONS



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**OPENING STATEMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 8 October 2012

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Let me begin by congratulating all the Bureau members, and you, Mr. Chairman, on your elections.

In a world facing increasing uncertainty and risk, this Committee continues to play a central role in guiding and fostering coherent policy responses.

I note, too, the Committee's recent discussions on both its working methods and the six special events proposed for this session.

I eagerly await their outcomes.

As you pursue your agenda this year, you can count on DESA's full support.

Distinguished Delegates,

Once again, the world economy is teetering on the cliff.

DESA's latest forecast projects global GDP growth of just 2.5% in 2012 — and barely more for 2013.

Glaring weaknesses include: poor job growth; a still fragile financial sector; unsustainable public debt; social inequalities, and ecosystems in peril.

Getting the world back on track will require tackling all of these.

This is no easy task.

Yet, to focus on economic challenges alone would be an equally grave mistake; getting the world on a more sustainable development path must remain a high priority.

Mr. Chairman,

Three ongoing processes look set to reshape the UN's development work.

The first is the follow-up to the recent Rio+20 Conference, which articulated a far-reaching vision.

It is now our responsibility to help turn that vision into reality.

In this regard, the General Assembly will deal with a number of issues, including

- promoting agreements on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- developing a facilitation mechanism to disseminate eco-friendly technologies, and
- adopting a 10-year framework of programs to encourage sustainable consumption and production patterns

The Second Committee will guide these important discussions, paving the way for the adoption of a number of resolutions for action.

At Rio, Member States also reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to Small Island Developing States by agreeing to hold a major conference for 2014.

Here, the Second Committee should lay out a platform on which to coordinate balanced, integrated action in support of SIDS.

Distinguished Delegates,

Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remains foremost on our collective agenda. Yet, we are aware that we have only three years remaining to achieve these goals.

With this in mind, we have embarked on the second major process – preparations for the post-2015 UN development agenda. DESA is co-leading the UN Task Team charged with planning, together with UNDP.

The third — and no less prominent — process I'd like to draw attention to are efforts to strengthen global economic governance.

This remains very much a work in progress. Yet achieving a more stable, resilient, development-friendly global financial system and strengthening global economic governance is critical to the health of the world economy.

Rio recognized this, too, pointing out the major role an improved financial system could play in mobilizing resources more efficiently for sustainable development. This would require,

among others, building infrastructure, boosting human capital, and encouraging technology transfer.

Excellencies,

An important test of our resolve to build “the future we want” will be measured in how successfully we strengthen cooperation — both within the UN system, and with all our development partners.

Take the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) deliberations. These deliberations are an important step forward, which will largely define how the UN system operates for years to come.

Here, whether advising on questions of impact or efficiency, the entire UN system is counting on the Second Committee for leadership. Indeed, some areas in particular would benefit from your special consideration, such as:

1. Better responding to country-specific development challenges.
2. Improving both the UN resident coordinator system and program performance reviews, and
3. Weaving “effectiveness” more fully into development cooperation dialogue.

A clear and precise resolution on QCPR will help the UN development system in becoming more responsive to the changing development landscape.

Distinguished Delegates,

This Committee has made historic decisions that have helped prevent crises, inspire visionary changes and put the world on a more sustainable path.

As we continue to grapple with multiple challenges, we need, above all, continued leadership and commitment. The choices we make now will shape the UN development agenda for a generation.

I wish the Committee success as you navigate the journey ahead. Please rest assured that DESA, and I, myself, stand ready to support your work.

Thank you.
