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## **OPENING REMARKS BY**

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**Commission for Social Development  
47<sup>th</sup> Session  
Launch of the World Day of Social Justice**

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I would like to warmly welcome you all to the launch of the World Day of Social Justice.

Social justice should be on our minds especially now, when we address the current global crises, be they finance, food or climate related. The ongoing deterioration of the global economy pushes more people into unemployment and poverty. We are also witnessing growing social unrest while inequality and different forms of discrimination are on the rise as well.

Unless swift action is taken, these crises will have an adverse impact, particularly on the most vulnerable in our societies. We must not allow such marginalisation.

All that makes this first observance of the World Day of Social Justice even more relevant in today's turbulent world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The World Day of Social Justice is to be celebrated in 10 days, on February 20<sup>th</sup>. However, we thought it would be fitting to have an official launch during the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development, since the work of this Commission is based on the very premises of social justice for all.

Moreover, the resolution establishing the World Day of Social Justice invited all Member States to devote this day to the promotion of activities in accordance with the objectives and goals of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. And as you know, the Commission for Social Development is entrusted with the implementation of the commitments from both the Summit and its follow-up session.

It is also worth recalling that the World Social Summit recognized that social development aims at social justice, solidarity, harmony and equality within and among countries and that social justice, equality and equity constitute the fundamental values of all societies.

To achieve "a society for all" governments made a commitment to the creation of a framework for action to promote social justice at national, regional and international levels.

I would also like to bring to mind that some elements of such frameworks indicated at the Social Summit, included:

- Ensuring that all people are equal before the law
- Regularly reviewing public policy from social and gender equality perspective
- Expanding and improving access to basic services with eventual ensuring of universal coverage
- Creating equal opportunities in access to employment

- Encouraging the free formation of cooperatives and other grass roots organizations

The commitments we want to focus on today relate to the three pillars of Copenhagen: poverty eradication, full employment, now expanded by the concept of decent work and social integration, a priority theme for the current session of the Commission for Social Development.

It is only through co-operation at all levels - international, regional and national - that governments can make real progress in eradicating discrimination and injustice and paving the way for true participation and social justice. We need a multi-stakeholder approach that incorporates both the civil society and the private sector.

To conclude, ladies and gentlemen,

**The promotion of social integration is an important way to ensure social justice in contemporary societies.**

**When we speak of social integration we refer to a process of building of values, relations and institutions to create a society that recognizes rights and responsibilities of all its citizens. Such recognition is truly a prerequisite for social justice.**

**At the same time it is important to recognize that in turn only when we respect the principles of social justice can we actually achieve a socially inclusive society.**

**Let us also not forget that social integration built on the principles of social justice is essential for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.**

There are two basic questions we will try to answer here today:

1. What are the best ways to promote social justice in accordance with the three pillars of Copenhagen? and
2. How, in turn, implementing of Copenhagen commitments can bring us closer to ensuring social justice for all?

I am sure that with the help of the distinguished speakers today, we will reflect on the importance of social justice in today's world in a meaningful and effective way.

Thank you.