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United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

OPENING REMARKS

H. E. Mr. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava
President of the Economic and Social Council
55th Session of the Commission for Social Development
New York, UNHQ: 1 February 2017

Mr. Lenni Montiel, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic
Development in DESA,
Excellences,
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here at the opening of one of the oldest and also the first of the ECOSOC functional commissions to meet this year. Your work will set an example for the success of all the other commissions that will meet in later months to deliberate on socio-economic issues.

The Economic and Social Council and the entire ECOSOC system – particularly the system's functional commissions – are focused on the broad United Nations development agenda and on supporting the effective achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals at the national level.



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In the context of an increasingly complex and often volatile global environment, the ECOSOC functional commissions provide unique global multi-stakeholder platforms to engage in action-oriented, substantive discussions and provide integrated and coherent policy guidance on the global development agenda.

This Commission plays an essential role for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Your work on promoting social policies that seek to improve the lives of all people, including youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, affects the lives of billions of people; helping to ensure that no one is left behind. Furthermore the thematic areas of your work are at the centre of this Agenda: the first of the Sustainable Development Goals is to end poverty by 2030.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to reach people who remain in extreme poverty, as they often are marginalized, live in fragile socio-economic contexts and remote areas. Access to good schools, healthcare, electricity, safe water and other critical services still elude too many people, especially those living in poverty. Moreover, for those who have been able to move out of poverty, progress is often temporary. It will be critical to find ways to tackle these issues to fulfil the promises of the 2030 Agenda. It is in this context that I identified, as my top priorities, infrastructure development and industrialization, especially in the context of support for African development, and for all the countries in special situations.



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Today's generation can be the one that eradicates poverty and turns the tide on inequality, exclusion and environmental degradation. Achieving those objectives requires implementing a broad set of mutually reinforcing social and economic policies and strategies as well as leveraging the synergies between them. That is why your discussions matter. Your deliberations on strategies for poverty eradication and on issues of leaving no one behind will provide important guidance to Member States. In this endeavour, I take note that you have the unfailing support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with 70 years of experience behind it.

I appreciate your efforts to ensure that your discussions in this session will provide valuable input to the 2017 ECOSOC main theme on "Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges", as well as the 2017 High-level Political Forum, "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".

Finally, I also would like to highlight that the work of the Commission will be further amplified by the ECOSOC Integration Segment, which will take place from 8 to 10 May this year. I am pleased to share that the Council just agreed that the Segment will focus on the theme of "Making eradication of poverty an integral objective of all policies: what will it take?"



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I look forward to your contributions in this regard.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to address you today.



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