



# ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

## TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**Statement by His Excellency Frederick Makamure Shava  
President of the Economic and Social Council  
ECOSOC Organizational Session  
Thursday, 28 July, 2016**

Your Excellency Ambassador Oh Joon, outgoing ECOSOC President and Distinguished Members of the ECOSOC Bureau,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am truly honoured to address you today, upon my election to the Presidency of the Economic and Social Council. I want to thank you for the confidence you have entrusted in me and my colleagues in the Bureau for the 2017 session of the Council. Indeed as I congratulate my colleague members of the Bureau for their election into the Council, allow me to express my full confidence in the Bureau's ability to guide the work of the Council and its network of subsidiary bodies as we earnestly begin the all-important work of overseeing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the global level.

In the past year, the Council has enjoyed tremendous success under the stewardship of His Excellency Ambassador Oh Joon and his team. I extend profound congratulations to him for an excellent job. I am proud to have been a part of his team.

He has given an elaborate account of the achievements of the 2016 session. He has also guided us with solid advice to aid in our work ahead. We have listened very carefully and will apply these lessons and good practices assiduously to make the Council better, more effective and relevant.



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Distinguished Delegates,

The achievement of Agenda 2030 and our own continent's Agenda 2063 are premised on countries being able to attain structural economic transformation as a critical precondition for transiting from low to high productivity ensuring inclusive growth that leaves no one behind and prosperity in a more equitable and secure world.

There are many worrying trends in the world today. Almost on a daily basis, we are confronted with disturbing reports of instability and armed conflict, global humanitarian and human rights crises, terrorism and violent extremism, inequality and growing economic, social, and environmental tensions.

Consequently, surmounting these ills, through the SDGs, in all societies, should be our rallying call. And this should be the central endeavour in all countries, in this Council, and in all multilateral institutions.

Distinguished Delegates,

I come from a region in which the Millennium Development Goals remain largely unfinished and where, regrettably, scores of people remain in deprivation and want. We, like the rest of the world, have welcomed the Sustainable Development Goals, with their overarching goal of poverty eradication, as a better, more dynamic and transformative blueprint for completing the unfinished business of the MDGs and realising the future we want. We know, however, that implementing them will be a challenge which will require concerted action at all levels.



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What I have highlighted above is also the stark reality for countries in special situations – least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, Small Island Developing States, and those emerging from conflict. It is also equally true for the marginalized and vulnerable in all countries – and that is why the agenda is universal, integrated and indivisible.

But there is hope. In all the testimonies I hear in this Council, there is complete agreement that the world today has better capacity to meet these development aspirations than at any other time in human history. The opportunities for eradicating poverty and empowering people through investment, trade, sustainable production, as well as for social services that leave no one behind are unprecedented.

We can pursue sustainable agriculture and industrialization if we make the necessary investments in policy, technology and human resources. We can structurally transform our economies in order to promote inclusive and sustained economic growth while simultaneously achieving our collective social and environmental objectives. We can make the world a safer and prosperous place for all. And we can do all this fairly and equitably.

Distinguished Delegates,

Making the sustainable development vision a reality requires cooperation between countries, mediated by the many regional and multilateral arrangements that are already in place. We believe that enhancing the exchange of best practices among nations and regions will be critical in enhancing international cooperation for sustainable development.



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This spirit of cooperation and shared values has made it possible for us to envision a world where all challenges, however complex and resource intensive –poverty eradication, climate change, humanitarian crises and breaches of peace and security – can be navigated successfully. We can be optimistic about our shared future. But we must work deliberately to translate opportunities into tangible development outcomes for all.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to focus our collaborative work in the year ahead, I would like to propose a set of priorities.

Firstly, I would like the Council to dedicate enough time on the question of infrastructure development and industrialization, especially in the context of support for African development, and as a high priority for all the countries in special situations.

Goal 9 of the SDGs calls for building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation. The Africa Agenda 2063 calls on African countries to transform, grow and industrialize their economies, and modernize agriculture and agro-business through value-addition and productivity increase.

As we know, infrastructure remains one of the key impediments to development in Africa as its poor state and underdevelopment inordinately increases the cost of doing business. This is compounded many times over for African countries that are landlocked and have to rely on neighbouring countries, with equally poor infrastructure, for access to external markets.



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According to the African Development Bank, based on a sample of 48 economies, Africa generates roughly the same level of electricity as Spain, although Africa's population is nearing 1.1 billion compared to a population of 49 million in Spain. The Priority Action Plan of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa alone estimated an investment need of US\$68 billion between 2012 and 2020.

Funding for infrastructure projects is a challenge that has not yet been surmounted in Africa and most countries in special situations. Historically, industrialization has been associated with economic progress. In many cases, the failure to translate economic growth into employment and social development is explained by the failure to transform from agro-commodity sector driven progress into successful industrialization. Many agree that long-term growth and sustainable development depend on the capacities of countries for continuous structural transformation, including through technological advancement and industrialization. I believe that emphasis on infrastructure and industrialization is critical for the countries furthest behind. Other factors such as the domestic and international environment will, of course, also need to be addressed, but the core drivers of growth and productivity should be emphasized. Therefore, after close consultation with the Bureau, it is my intention to seek your support to organize one or two special meetings of the Council in order to come up with viable proposals and recommendations on this complex but critical topic.

Secondly, we recognise the nexus between development, human rights, peace and security. Indeed the 2030 Agenda recognises the need to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. In view of this, during my presidency I intend to explore options for enhancing the partnership between ECOSOC and



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relevant UN bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission on the interlinkages between development, peace and security.

Distinguished delegates,

The SDGs remain indivisible and interlinked. Therefore, in dealing with these priorities, we should look at the linkages between the goals as well as the need to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development.

We should also bear in mind that many Member States see ECOSOC as the natural home for new and emerging issues of global importance that are essential to the success of the SDGs. In this connection, two issues of considerable importance have emerged in recent times, including during the 2015-2016 ECOSOC cycle, namely: inequality, and strengthening multilateralism in the face of globalization trends.

The first could be prioritised through expanding collaboration with academia, ‘think-tanks’ and other stakeholders, with a view to informing various policy options, building on the outcome of the Special Meeting of the Council in March of this year.

The second could be discussed during the joint GA Second Committee-ECOSOC meeting which is scheduled for October.

Other themes and emerging issues will be handled in tandem with established sessions such as the Youth Forum, Partnership Forum, the Integration Segment, the DCF, the FfD Forum and of course, the High Level Political Forum.



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Distinguished Delegates,

As you may know, the work on strengthening the UN system will continue over the foreseeable period under the overall guidance of the General Assembly. We are part of this process. The Council, and all of its subsidiary bodies, have a leadership role in guiding the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The ECOSOC system will need to enhance its leadership role and contribute to the advancement of sustainable development by promoting global norms, providing policy recommendations and supporting a coherent and inclusive follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda. During the 2017 session, we hope to accelerate the vertical and horizontal linkages between the Council and its subsidiary bodies, through an annual meeting of the ECOSOC Bureau and the Chairs of the functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies and other mechanisms.

We must consolidate the institutional innovations we have in place – the new segment structure, the work of the HLPF under auspices of ECOSOC, the new working arrangements for the Council, such as the forums on financing for development, on science, technology and innovation, on youth and on partnerships. Through its robust and enduring, yet continuously evolving structure, I am confident that the Council is in a strong position to advance its leadership role, as we gear up to speed in on our journey on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,



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Through the Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system, ECOSOC has made a very strong contribution to the upcoming quadrennial comprehensive review of operational activities of the UN system. This is our traditional role, but it has added urgency. We need to ensure that the UN system is fit for purpose as we support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, especially at the country level.

Bold proposals discussed during the dialogue included stepping up the UN system's leadership, developing tailor-made solutions, adopting multi-stakeholder approaches and cutting across vertical lines to move towards horizontal accountability and collective results. Member States recognized the role of ECOSOC as crucial in breaking silos and bridging divides across thematic issues, work pillars and governance structures. As many Member States have called for further strengthening of the Council, ECOSOC could consider, in its 2017 session, how it could promote a strategic and coherent direction for the UN development system in this new development era.

We already have very clear guidance on these issues. What is needed is to ensure that they are being implemented fully.

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a healthy workload ahead of us. Happily, we have a solid foundation on which to continue building our house. Let us all make our own contribution that enables the Council to live up to its Charter mandate. Let us add more momentum to the implementation of Agenda 2030 in time for 2030.

Thank you for your attention.



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