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United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

Check Against Delivery

**Remarks by
Her Excellency Marie Chatardová
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York
ECOSOC Organizational Session
27 July 2017**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Members of the ECOSOC Bureau,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an extraordinary honour for me to address you this morning as newly elected President of this august body. I wish to thank all of you for your trust and confidence in my leadership of the Economic and Social Council in its upcoming cycle.

I would like to extend special thanks to His Excellency Ambassador Frederick Shava, for his able leadership of the Council during this last cycle.

Ambassador Shava, it has been a great honour to have you as our President as you guided us through a new era for the Council. Thank you.

I would also like to recognize the outstanding contributions and expert stewardship of my fellow Bureau members, His Excellency Mr. Cristián Barros Melet of Chile, His Excellency Mr. Jürgen Schulz of Germany and His Excellency Mr. Nabeel Munir of Pakistan. It has truly been a privilege to have worked with you.

Allow me to also extend my sincere congratulations and a warm welcome to the newly elected Bureau members: His Excellency Mahmamin Mahmadaminov of Tajikistan, Her Excellency Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, His Excellency Marc Pecsteen of Belgium and the forthcoming distinguished member of the Bureau from the Region of Africa.

I look forward to working with each of you in this critical time in which we will need to redouble our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda in an increasingly challenging global



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Excellencies,

We have gathered here a week after the conclusion of this year's HLPF, where we have assessed our progress on the way towards implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The enormous interest among Member States to participate in the Voluntary National Reviews is encouraging. It proves that we take our shared vision of a better world seriously.

During our discussions, we have noted a number of positive developments. Economies of many of our countries are growing. Millions of people have been elevated out of poverty over the last decades.

We are experiencing an unprecedented rate of change in technological development and innovation, which is impacting all aspects of our lives and giving us new opportunities to deliver on the targets we have set out for 2030.

Having said that, we are also experiencing rising inequalities in a majority of countries, which have undermined social cohesion and universal participation in economic, social and political life. There is no doubt that we live in challenging times.

If multilateralism is to stay relevant in this evolving context, we need to take these challenges seriously, and work on devising solutions to address them.

I believe that the ECOSOC system has a key role to play in this regard.

Member States have high expectations of ECOSOC to lead in the global implementation and review of the SDGs. Many of the most pressing global challenges are directly addressed in the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Council should continue to provide leadership on important issues in the economic and social realm.

As you recall, the main theme of the 2018 session will be "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities."

Thematically aligned with the ECOSOC theme will be the 2018 HLPF focus on "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

In line with that, I wish to announce that the key priority of my Presidency will be to develop initiatives towards fostering sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all.

In the 2030 Agenda, Heads of State and Government recognized that fostering inclusive societies based on strong and transparent institutions is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.



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Building sustainable and inclusive societies is a crosscutting endeavour, essential to the achievement of all SDGs, including SDG5 on gender equality, SDG8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG10 on reduced inequalities, SDG11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG13 on climate action and SDG16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. It is obvious that successful development of any society is not possible without rule of law and good governance.

At the same, inclusion and participation are related not only to governance and institutions but they are also critical for achieving targets in the areas of economic empowerment, education, health and gender.

I am sure that developed and developing countries alike will benefit from a strengthened social compact based on inclusiveness.

We must work together and make all efforts to achieve what we have set out: “to leave no-one behind”. Truly no-one!

No human being deserves to be excluded from the society. To achieve our goals, we need participation of all stakeholders.

To explore further collective action on this issue within the context of the 2030 Agenda, I intent to hold an ECOSOC Special Meeting at United Nations Headquarters in May 2018.

The Special Meeting will be complemented and informed by various preparatory activities. These could include preparatory meetings that reflect on the universal nature of efforts to foster inclusion and participation for sustainable development, with a goal to bring discussions on the issues into the realm of ECOSOC.

I am confident that the Special Meeting and its preparatory activities will be an occasion for ECOSOC to provide a positive contribution and guidance to the international community.

Excellencies,

In the next twelve months, we will need to focus specifically on how ECOSOC and the ECOSOC system can exercise coherent support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This includes fostering momentum for the reform agenda.

Over the past years, ECOSOC has been central to the discussion on the repositioning of the UN development system. Through my Presidency, I intend to solidify this role.

I am grateful for the visionary approach of the Secretary-General that aims to strengthen this platform to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, ensure system-wide accountability for results, and better link the normative and operational work.



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I will work closely with the Secretary-General and with Member States in the months ahead, both by offering the space to further discuss the repositioning of the UN development system and advance the ability of the Council to serve as the central platform to realize the SDGs.

I will equally strive to connect the intergovernmental processes at the United Nations with the realities on the ground, including by contributing to the alignment of the work of Member States across its principal organs and with the UN development system.

An effective coordination and cooperation between ECOSOC and the General Assembly must play an important role in this effort. I look forward to working with Ambassador Miroslav Lajčák as President of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

Distinguished Delegates,

The seventy-second session of the General Assembly will also undertake a review of its resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. It is an opportunity to discuss further improvements to our working methods and, at the same time, to support the reform efforts of the Secretary General. I will work very closely with the President of the General Assembly to ensure that the Council is further strengthened through the review.

The Council should also further mobilize civil society actors and make full use of their invaluable contribution to the global policy debate on development issues. With an increased number of non-governmental actors seeking consultative status, the Council should make extra efforts to explore all possible ways to ensure that the voice of civil society, in all its diversity, is heard in our work.

Speaking about non-governmental actors, the role of business is more important than ever. We shall not be able to deliver on the SDGs without clear commitments from the business community.

Another opportunity to discuss the role of the private sector will be the third ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development. We must sustain the political momentum for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

As part of these efforts, we will need to think together about effective ways to strengthen the link with the HLPF, in line with the Addis Agenda and the 2030 Agenda.

Excellencies,

In the upcoming year, I will build on the ECOSOC forums and the rich expertise of the ECOSOC functional commissions and expert bodies to create the necessary momentum to reach our objectives.



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I am convinced that the 2018 Integration Segment will provide a unique opportunity to underline the importance of coherence and policy integration across all dimensions for the achievement of our ambitious agenda.

I also look forward to the 2018 Youth Forum, where I expect to hear more about how we can leverage the ideas of young people for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular the SDGs that will be more deeply explored during the 2018 HLPF.

I am committed to strengthening the distinctive role of the Development Cooperation Forum within the high-level segment of ECOSOC. In its reviews of trends and progress in international development cooperation, the DCF shows the value that ECOSOC can add, at the global level, in mobilizing the means of implementation for sustainable development.

I encourage all to engage in the preparations for the sixth biennial high-level meeting of the DCF. Two preparatory symposiums, as well as briefings, side events and expert group meetings are planned. Countries are also encouraged to participate in the 5th biennial DCF Global Accountability Survey, which will provide evidence on the state of play in development cooperation on the ground.

I am also committed to enhancing ECOSOC's engagement with key partners through the ECOSOC Partnership Forum, the Multi-stakeholder Forum for Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, and the High-level Political Forum. We will continue to explore innovative ways to enhance the effectiveness of partnerships in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

I also intend to continue to intensify the Council's relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission to enhance the peace and development nexus at the intergovernmental level. There is no development without peace and no peace without development.

The Statistical Commission's work will be crucial in guiding the process in providing statistical evidence on our ambitious agenda and its progress.

Its High-Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building is leading the work, through the development of the Cape Town global action plan. This action plan sets out objectives to strengthen the statistical capacity of national statistical offices.

Furthermore, the 2018 World Data Forum will offer another exciting opportunity to bring together data producers and users to highlight innovation ways to harness data for the SDGs.

Early next year, the priority theme of the Commission for Social Development will be to focus on strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all.



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For its part, the Commission on the Status of Women will address challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

The Committee for Development Policy will conduct a triennial review of the list of LDCs and identify countries to be included in, or graduated from, this category. The outcome of the review will help us to better support LDC Member States in overcoming structural development challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the purposes of the United Nations, incorporated into the Preamble of the United Nations Charter, is to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The 2030 Agenda is an excellent tool. Let us seize this opportunity – for ourselves, our children and future generations.

It is our generation's responsibility to realize the Agenda's vision. A vision of a better future for people and planet.

I am proud that ECOSOC plays an important part in this effort.

Once again, thank you for your support and the trust you have placed in me. I appreciate it dearly.

I thank you.



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