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Check Against Delivery

**Remarks by
H.E. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava
President of the Economic and Social Council**

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

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This will be my final statement for the 2017 session of the Council. It is time to say goodbye, to take stock of what we have achieved, and to look forward to new ideas and initiatives.

The 2017 session of ECOSOC has coincided with a growing consensus on the need to reposition sustainable development at the heart of the United Nations. The 2030 Agenda is our primary roadmap, and the Council is where we can coordinate action, learn from each other and devise ways of moving forward coherently.

Throughout this year, the Council prioritized the eradication of poverty in all its dimensions. As part of this, we explored various means for promoting sustainable development; expanding opportunities; and addressing related challenges to leave no one behind.

It was a tall order, but we made good progress. Therefore, let me begin by thanking all of you for your support and collective efforts to ensure that ECOSOC lives up to the vision of the UN Charter.



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My colleagues in the Bureau have played a central role. I want to thank each of them – Ambassadors Marie Chatardova of the Czech Republic, Cristián Barros Melet of Chile, Jürgen Schulz of Germany and Nabeel Munir of Pakistan – for their invaluable work and the dedication of their teams.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Chatardova on her election as President for the 2018 session of the Council, and welcome the new members of the Bureau.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the course of this session, Member States and development partners increasingly expressed concern about a growing sense of retreat from global cooperation. A palpable sense of weakening commitments to multilateralism pointed to a potential undermining of our pursuit of global peace and prosperity.

This comes at a particularly critical juncture for the international community. Rapid changes in economies, labour markets and societies are confounding policymakers, institutions and communities. In the words of Thomas Friedman, who spoke at a joint ECOSOC-Second Committee meeting late last year on the current global context – “This is not your grandmother’s globalization”.

Alongside these changes, the existential threat of climate change looms large. Every day, we see its adverse impacts more dramatically, such as the recent rupture from the ice shelf in Antarctica.

While these challenges are global in nature, their impact is often heaviest in countries in special situations. This is especially true for the people of Africa. In response, the African Union Agenda 2063 is fundamental to the sustainable development of the continent and overall efforts towards the SDGs.

In times such as these, we need to work together for a stronger, more coherent and relevant UN, including ECOSOC. At the Organization’s founding, this body was built on the



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premise that sustaining peace could only be accomplished in tandem with the development of all people across the globe.

By strengthening its work throughout this substantive session and drawing on the resources of the entire system, I believe that ECOSOC has made substantial progress in this direction throughout 2017.

The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development focused on the theme, “*Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world*”. Building on the previous year’s success, the number of national reviews almost doubled from 22 to 43 volunteer countries in 2017. This is evidence of the interest and demand among Member States in using the HLPF as the global platform for sharing knowledge and reviewing progress on the SDGs.

In addition, a wide range of quality inputs informed the thematic reviews of selected SDGs. The ECOSOC system came together holistically, including the functional and regional commissions, committees and expert bodies that have proven so critical to steering us towards evidence-based, integrated approaches to sustainable development.

We also heard from the increasing array of partners and stakeholders needed for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. I was inspired by something I heard from the delegation of Norway during the HLPF: “No one can do everything, but we can all do something”. As we implement the SDGs, let this be the mantra of each of us in our respective Ministries, Organisations and communities.

In this vein, ECOSOC greatly benefits from the knowledge and experience of civil society actors, in particular non-governmental organizations and major groups. The steady increase in NGOs seeking consultative status shows the strong demand for engaging with the UN on the 2030 Agenda. This year, the Council granted consultative status to some 460 organizations, many of them from the developing world. I trust that these organizations will actively contribute to our work, and I welcome them today.



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Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I hope that you will allow me to share some of my perspectives on the Council that I have developed during my time as President, and the year before, as a Bureau Member.

First, I mentioned at the outset that – in my view -- the moment is ripe for further strengthening ECOSOC to support the 2030 Agenda.

As you will be aware, there are various efforts underway to align the United Nations and its various components with the objectives of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

As the locus for a diverse group of entities of the UN system, ECOSOC provides overall guidance on sustainable development. To support a repositioned UN development system, the Council will need to ensure that its work reinforces coordination and accountability for system-wide implementation of the SDGs. Ensuring that development commitments—and norms—are translated into meaningful changes “on the ground” is key.

In this respect, the Council has played a central role through the ECOSOC Dialogue, and its continuation over the past year as a central platform for Member States to discuss the repositioning of the UN development system. Ideas that emerged and developed were carried through, resulting in the landmark 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

Just a few weeks ago, on 5 July, the Secretary-General addressed the Council to present his vision on the repositioning of the UN development system. I trust that the Council will continue to provide the intergovernmental space needed for ensuring the UN development system advances SDG implementation.

As part of overall efforts towards greater coherence, ECOSOC should ensure that it complements the work of other UN Charter bodies. Thanks to the strong collaboration between Ambassador Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly and myself, I would like to think we have set a good model this year for future synergies. Looking ahead, an



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important element of this will be the ongoing intergovernmental discussions aligning the agendas of the GA, ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies.

The work of the Development Cooperation Forum has generated concrete recommendations on development cooperation as a lever for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, focusing on the furthest behind first. We have worked on adapting institutions and policies in support of priorities in developing countries; how development cooperation can contribute to the mobilization and optimal use of all means of implementation; and enhancing quality, effectiveness and impact for sustainable development. It is essential to build on the contributions of DCF, with its unique role within the high-level segment of ECOSOC and in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 and Addis Agendas. Now more than ever in international affairs, shared spaces like the DCF are needed for exchanging knowledge and building trust, for dialogue that is reality based and results focused.

All of this activity points to the critical need for open and informed dialogue in the lead-up to the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, scheduled to take place during the 72nd session of the General Assembly. These resolutions have enabled the Council to be well-equipped as the central mechanism for coordination of the activities of the UN system and its specialized agencies, and its supervision of subsidiary bodies in the economic, social, environmental and related fields. These are important mandates to consider going forward.

Second, one of the biggest take-aways from the 2017 session is the importance of ECOSOC as a multi-stakeholder platform for forging solutions to complex and emerging issues.

As an example, ECOSOC continued to deepen our understanding of the nexus between peace and sustainable development this year by convening a joint meeting with the Peacebuilding Commission on the situation in the Sahel. Our discussion emphasised the need



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to address the root causes of poverty –the lack of economic opportunities and decent jobs; food insecurity; and climate change – while avoiding a disproportionate emphasis on security in that sub-region. A regional approach to the inter-linked challenges in the Sahel was also considered critical. I welcome the emerging consensus that all intergovernmental bodies should promote coherence across political, security, development and humanitarian actions. On partnerships, ECOSOC is playing a leading role in providing policy guidance on how the UN should partner with non-governmental stakeholders, while promoting accountability and transparency. The effectiveness of UN-associated partnerships in contributing to the 2030 Agenda will be determined by the degree to which its principles are respected. Therefore, a common set of core guidelines and principles for the whole UN system is crucial to safeguard the reputation and integrity of the organization. The Forum also focused the role of partnerships in mobilizing financial resources needed for resilient infrastructure.

With respect to financing for development, the second ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up was a success on all fronts. The Forum and its substantive, balanced and comprehensive outcome document signalled strong commitment of the international community to multilateralism and the global partnership for sustainable development, despite a challenging global environment. The 2017 report of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development provided a major substantive contribution to the Forum and served as the basis for its outcome. The effective modalities of the 2017 Forum set a high standard for future Forums and should be kept and further reinforced.

In 2017, the Council also devoted time to the question of infrastructure, industrialization and innovation, especially in developing countries. I called for a Special Meeting of the Council on this topic—and its inter-linkages across the SDGs—which was held in May and preceded by two preparatory events. At the preparatory event in Victoria Falls, we focused on the role of agriculture and agro-industry for propelling growth, job



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creation and food security. This is a sector of huge, mostly untapped potential for developing countries.

In response to growing demand from Member States for technical assistance in this area, FAO and UNIDO announced their proposal for the Accelerated Agriculture and Agro-industry Development Initiative PLUS (or, 3ADI+) at the Special Meeting. The 3ADI+ is a global development partnership that builds on a previous programme implemented with key partners such as FAO, UNIDO, UN ECA, IFAD, and the African Development Bank, among others. It will build on lessons learned from initial experiences and working with developing countries in all regions. In the process of developing agro-industries and agriculture, countries participating in the initiative will be able to simultaneously make strides toward sustainable and inclusive economic growth, food security and reduction of poverty and hunger. I look forward to seeing this initiative develop further to catalyse the transformation of our economies and move our production up on the value chain.

Going forward, we should develop the Council further to be a visionary platform that anticipates, and responds to, new development trends with all relevant stakeholders. Excellencies,

My **third** and final observation before closing is that ECOSOC is uniquely positioned at the global level to support efforts to leave no one behind.

My predecessor, Ambassador Oh Joon of the Republic of Korea, recognised this by putting a special focus on inequality during his presidency.

We must not lose sight of the fact that the 2030 Agenda is a universal agenda. This provides many opportunities for knowledge-sharing within the Council, and connects us in our various implementation efforts. At the same time, the 2030 Agenda was ground-breaking in its commitment to ensure that global progress is inclusive. This is underscored by our promise to leave no one behind and our collective endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.



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A critical piece of leaving no one behind is having good-quality data and statistics for reviewing progress. I was pleased to see the Council adopt last month the “global indicator framework for the SDGs and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” which was developed by the Statistical Commission. The Framework was mandated by the 2030 Agenda and its adoption ECOSOC – and the GA earlier this month -- provides another critical milestone of the work towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

As importantly, young people continue to disproportionately bear the burden of government and market failures, including limited educational opportunities, a lack of decent work and exclusion from political decision-making. Young women and girls face significant challenges in these areas. I am pleased that the ECOSOC Youth Forum has become a forum of choice for young people’s engagement at the global level. The 2017 Youth Forum attracted a record number of participants from Governments, multilateral organisations and influential youth networks. Given their status as “Generation 2030”, we must do more to give meaning and value young people’s participation in the 2030 Agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The success of ECOSOC should be measured not by the number of resolutions that it adopts, but by the impact that it has on the lives of real people. ECOSOC is where Member States coordinate and guide the UN development system, and can therefore make a real impact on citizens around the world.

The Council’s work is never done, and 2018 will not be an exception. I am humbled by the opportunity to serve as President, and am extremely honoured to hand the presidency to the new President, Ambassador Chatardova.

It has been my great privilege to serve the Council this year. Once again, I thank all of you for your cooperation and collaboration this year, including the Bureau; Members of the Council; Colleague Ambassadors who availed their diplomatic skills and time to facilitate various key processes such as the Forum for Science, Technology and Innovation, the Finance



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and Development Forum, and the High-Level Political Forum Outcome documents, staff from the Secretariat, especially DESA and DGACM; and everyone else who contributed to the work.

I am hopeful that the 2018 session will work to address the challenges of our day, building on the groundwork laid this year, and take advantage of the many new opportunities on the horizon.

Thank you.



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