

Statement

by

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Vice President of Economic and Social Council

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Distinguished Members of the Committee for Development Policy,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to address this inaugural session of the Committee for Development Policy and to welcome the new membership of the Committee. On behalf of Ambassador Oh Joon, the President of ECOSOC, and my colleagues in the ECOSOC Bureau, I wanted to thank you all: the returning members for agreeing to serve one more term, the new members for agreeing to join in and share your advice and expertise.

The Committee has been providing valuable insights to our discussions. Over the years, the CDP made numerous contributions on how to advance domestic and international policies to achieve the millennium development goals, the MDGs. More recently, your recommendations on the preparation of the 2030 sustainable development agenda enriched our deliberations and drew our attention to emerging issues relevant for the strengthening of international cooperation for development. Your work on the least developed country category has been pivotal not only in identifying these countries, but also in devising policies to accelerate their development and their graduation from the category on a sustainable basis. The Council is looking forward to your innovative ideas and suggestions on how to further improve our work in guiding and supporting member States to meet the ambitious goals adopted by the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Chair,

ECOSOC celebrated its 70th anniversary this past January. Following the adoption of the UN Charter in 1945, the Council had its first meeting in 1946 to promote social progress and better living standards for all in larger freedom. We remain committed to our original mandate. But our task has become increasingly challenging as the world economy evolves and becomes increasingly sophisticated and complex. As a result, ECOSOC has also become an increasingly complex entity. It could perhaps be better understood as a system, currently supported by 30 subsidiary bodies, which includes functional commissions, the UN regional commissions, standing committees and expert bodies—your Committee being one of them.

Our approaches have also evolved over time, and we now conduct our work and deliberations in many ways, including sessions, segments, forums and high level meetings. I am sure my friend Navid Hanif has competently briefed you on the intricacies of our working methods. In this regard, I would like to highlight two important points.

First, if our work processes have become more numerous over the years, the opportunities for your participation have also increased, and I would like to extend you an invitation to contribute not only to our high level segment in July but also to support our work throughout the year.

Second, the essence of the Council's mandate has remained the same, if not strengthened over time. ECOSOC has been the principal body of the United Nations for coordination, policy review, dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, including on the implementation of the international development goals agreed at the various conferences and summits of the United Nations.

I already mentioned the 2030 Agenda and your contribution to its elaboration. After several months of intense negotiations, the Agenda was adopted this past September reflecting the global consensus on our vision for the future. It also indicates what needs to be done for that vision to become reality. With negotiations over, implementation begins. And, with 17 goals and 169 targets to meet by 2030, we have a critical task ahead of us and, no time to waste. This year,

ECOSOC will be focusing its deliberations on how to best implement this new agenda; more precisely, on how to move from commitments to results.

I understand CDP will be contributing to our deliberations by tackling the issue of how to promote and expand productive capacity for sustainable development. I am glad you decided to approach implementation from the productive capacity prism, for I believe that building productive capacity will help countries generate the social, economic and environmental outcomes they hope for.

In fact, the 2030 Agenda includes a number of goals and targets are related to increasing productive capacities. SDG-8, on growth, work and employment, and SDG-9 on infrastructure, industrialization and innovation, are cases in point. But productive capacity is more than physical structures and machinery. It also includes human and financial resources, knowledge and skills, technological and managerial capabilities. Other SDGs will contribute to building and developing these other elements of productive capacity, such as the goals on health, education, nutrition, and accountable institutions.

As I see it, the impact does not go in one direction, from these goals into building productive capacity. Building capacity will also impact on these as well as other SDGs, such as those on gender equality, employment, income growth, and natural resources. However, I would argue that positive synergies may not be generated automatically. More importantly, I would say that *how* productive capacity is developed matters for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. Thus, we at the Council are very interested to hear from you how productive capacity should be promoted to unleash its transformative potential.

While countries have responsibility for their own development, they cannot do it alone; and the international development cooperation partnership has been playing an important role in this regard. However, we all know that international support should be strengthened; it should be more productive and responsive to countries' needs. This year, the Council will conduct its biannual Development Cooperation Forum. The DCF has the mandate to give policy guidance and recommendations to promote more effective international development cooperation.

Therefore, I would propose that during your deliberations you also examine the contribution of development cooperation for capacity building and suggest policies and guidelines to enhance its effectiveness for our consideration at the Forum.

I will stop here. You have an intense agenda in front of you and I do not wish to take more of your time. On behalf of the Council, I reiterate our appreciation for your engagement and continued efforts to provide us with your expert advice on various pressing development issues confronting our world today. I look forward to the outcome of your meeting and your report, and wish you success in your deliberations.

Thank you.