

**Closing Remarks by
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**at the
Economic and Social Council
Integration Segment**

**“Achieving sustainable development through
employment creation and decent work for all”**

**ECOSOC Chamber, New York
1 April 2015**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to join you for the closing of the Integration Segment. I am pleased to see that this Segment of the Council has become a unifying platform for Member States, the United Nations system and others, to debate policy options for the integration of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Over the last three days, we have heard how the creation of good quality jobs can help promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Almost everyone agrees that employment creation and decent work for all needs to be central to the post-2015 development agenda. We have a proposed SDG8 to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

We have had some very lively and thought-provoking discussions. You have put the spotlight on the need for getting people back to work, ways to boost sustainable global economic growth and job creation, and strategies for building a competitive workforce, to address the skills gap and the link between unemployment and social unrest. Getting to the core of these issues has demonstrated that policy choices have both trade-offs and long-term benefits, and must be addressed in an integrated way if we are to successfully implement the post-2015 development agenda.

In fact, throughout these important discussions, it is worth repeating the fundamental significance of the SDGs themselves, which is an *integrated* approach to sustainable development. This essentially means that *one topic* will not always be confined to *one Goal*. This is certainly true for employment, which is relevant *not just* to Goal8. It has relevance to other targets in the SDGs. For example:

- SDG 2.3
- SDG 4.4
- SDG 9.2; and
- SDG 12.8.

Excellencies,

We must continue our discussions on the transition to a green economy and ensure fairness for workers. We must harness the potential of technology in reducing the jobs and skills mismatch.

We have heard proposals on the means of implementation and financing framework. We must enhance synergies while upholding international labour standards, environmental safeguards, productivity, competitiveness and economic growth. These will in turn help to mobilize domestic revenues for investing in a sustainable development model.

We must also continue to focus on policy measures that are essential to reducing inequalities, which is at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. I am hopeful that these messages will be heard in Addis Ababa in July.

I join Ambassador Drobnyak in thanking all the participants for their valuable contributions to the Integration Segment. These policy messages will serve as important inputs to the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council, and the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of ECOSOC.

The Integration Segment serves as a global unifying platform to consolidate the inputs of Member States, the functional commissions and expert bodies of ECOSOC, the UN system and other relevant stakeholders. It is fundamental to pulling together the substantive work of the ECOSOC system and the UN system in promoting integrated policies. It should continue to engage policy makers and the UN system in the promotion of a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development around ECOSOC's annual theme.

The United Nations needs a strong ECOSOC Integration Segment to offer substantive and strategic policy guidance in the years ahead, particularly in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. This year's Integration Segment is a step in our quest for sustainable development and a world without poverty.

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs looks forward to continuing to work together with you in the same collaborative spirit in the transition towards the new sustainable development agenda.

Thank you.