

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

H.E. Ambassador Vladimir Drobnyak
Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council

Integration Segment
United Nations Headquarters, New York
27 May 2014

Opening Remarks

Her Excellency Vice-President of the General Assembly,
His Excellency Secretary-General,
His Excellency President Kagame,
His Excellency Vice-President Garzon,
His Excellency Michael Bloomberg,
Honourable Ministers and Mayors,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great privilege to open the first-ever meeting of the integration segment of the Economic and Social Council. The Segment will focus on sustainable urbanization, which is an issue very high on the agenda for sustainable development.

I am honoured to see such high-level representation in the first ever Integration Segment. I would like to thank everyone for their presence today, and to those who have provided inputs to the integration segment, including the 16 Member States and numerous inputs from the subsidiary bodies of the Council, the specialized agencies, the funds and programmes and the Secretariat. I also would like to express my appreciation to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN-Habitat, the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa and the United Cities and Local Governments for their tireless efforts to make this segment a success.

Let me start with a few words about the purpose of the Integration Segment and our discussions over the next three days. At Rio+20 Conference, Heads of State and Government recognized ECOSOC's key role in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, thereby reaffirming and elevating ECOSOC function as a platform for sustainable development and as a central mechanism to supervise its subsidiary bodies and coordinate the United Nations system.

This role was further reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the ECOSOC, which established an Integration Segment to fulfill the Council's integration and reaffirm its coordination function as mandated by Rio+20.

This Segment is indeed envisaged as a forum for all relevant stakeholders – consisting of Member States, ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, UN system and civil

society actors - to identify and promote concrete ways to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development as a critical input to the discussion in the High-level Segment and the High-Level Political Forum.

The 2014 ECOSOC session is the first session of the Council to be convened under this new structure.

The decision to focus on sustainable urbanization for the first session of the Segment was sensible and timely in view of the growing impact of urbanization trends on sustainable development; and in view of the growing importance of cities in delivering practical results to reduce poverty, protect the natural environment and improve disaster reduction and resilient.

We all agree with the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda that the struggle for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities. It is thus from the experience of cities around the world that we can learn important lessons on how urbanization can be transformational in the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Over the next three days, we will have the opportunity to discuss sustainable urbanization from this angle. We will hear different perspectives, experiences and lessons learned in promoting sustainable cities, with a view to exchange ideas, discuss good practices, and identify new and innovative approaches to ensure that urbanization promotes sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The new development agenda calls for us to be ambitious and innovative in our thinking and action in order to be able to surmount the scale of global challenges we face.

Today, we have a tremendous opportunity to do so in framing our discussion on sustainable urbanization and to provide strong leadership for current and future action in this area. I am confident that we will all seize this opportunity.

Thank you.