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**REMARKS
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ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)**

**Gearing development cooperation towards sustainable development –
*Where do we go from Rio?***

New York, 6 July 2012

Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome the Council's timely follow-up on Rio+20.

Rio+20 has reaffirmed political commitments for sustainable development. It has adopted a historic and forward-looking outcome, with a number of ground-breaking decisions.

Among these are the decisions to:

- launch a process to develop sustainable development goals,
- strengthen UNEP, and
- set up a High-level Political Forum,

as well as the guidelines on green economy as a tool for advancing sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The preparatory process of Rio+20 has helped us to go a long way. The Conference is a landmark event with unprecedented engagement from business and civil society stakeholders.

However, the hard work is only just beginning.

Where do we go from Rio+20?

Now is the time words need to be followed by action; political will needs to be translated into tangible progress on the ground.

Without follow-up action and without implementation, the Future We Want will become a high-sounding slogan.

Distinguished delegates,

The success of Rio+20 will depend on an effective and comprehensive follow-up of the commitments made.

We have heard it loud and clear from all sides in Rio: Business-as-usual will not get us to the “Future We Want”.

So what next?

With regard to development cooperation, the outcome document provides us with some important pointers. It tells us that:

- Every country is responsible for its own sustainable development.
- It also makes it very clear that in implanting sustainable development and in the transition towards a green economy, developing countries will require strengthened international cooperation and additional resources.
- Official development assistance remains a critical source of resources, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized, and it should continue to leverage other resource flows.

The outcome document acknowledges the role of South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as innovative sources of finance.

We need additional resources; however, we also need to improve their quality and allocate them more effectively.

Rio+20 has called upon each country to prioritize sustainable development in their allocation of resources. Countries should try to build on existing initiatives and funding mechanisms to avoid further fragmentation.

In 2014, the General Assembly will decide on an important report mandated by the outcome document. The report will propose options for a Sustainable Development Financing Strategy. The aim of the Strategy will be to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use for sustainable development results.

These issues are at the heart of our discussions during the last two days.

The DCF can play a critical, catalytic role in promoting international cooperation for sustainable development.

It can contribute to the coherence and integration of sustainable development goals within the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015.

The DCF can distill the lessons learned from development effectiveness into the sustainable development agenda, both in its preparatory work for the next phase and at the next biennial DCF.

Excellencies,

While governments will need to lead the transition towards a more sustainable development pathway, governments will not be able to go it alone.

The outcome document rightfully recognizes the crucial role of civil society and the business sector.

After all, some of the most innovative and effective solutions so far were spearheaded by business and civil society stakeholders. They have demonstrated that they are able and willing to be part of the solution.

The universal, intergovernmental, high-level political forum that will be established by the General Assembly will build on inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Over the past years, ECOSOC has gradually extended its dialogue with civil society, the business sector and foundations. Its experience, notably through the DCF, will provide valuable insight for the high level political forum.

So, if you were to ask me to summarize in one sentence - *what next after Rio+20?*

My answer is simple - “making good on our commitments.” It is the only way to ensure that “the future we want becomes the future we get” and not become a high-sounding slogan.

I look forward to our discussion.

Thank you.
