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Statement by H.E. Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations and President of the Economic and Social Council

Launch of the Development Cooperation Forum

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Mr. Secretary-General,
Madam President of the General Assembly,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As President of the Economic and Social Council, it gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to the official launch of the Development Cooperation Forum. It is fitting that the launch of the Forum takes place on the last day of the High-level Segment since the Development Cooperation Forum is truly a cornerstone in our efforts to strengthen the Economic and Social Council.

Looking back, the 2005 World Summit reaffirmed the need for the United Nations to play a fundamental role in the promotion of international cooperation for development. The Summit saw the United Nations as the main player in ensuring the coherence, coordination and implementation of development actions and goals agreed upon by the international community.

Member States also reaffirmed the mandate of the Economic and Social Council to coordinate the implementation of the development agenda. On the same occasion, they created the Development Cooperation Forum as a mechanism to enable the Council to perform this role more effectively.

The aim of the Forum is therefore - in short - to promote coherent and effective development cooperation for the realization of the internationally agreed development goals. This will be achieved by

dedicating part of the Forum to reviewing trends in international development cooperation, including the latest strategies, policies and financing modalities that are shaping the development agenda.

The Development Cooperation Forum will also take stock of progress in development cooperation which will involve identifying gaps and obstacles to realizing the potential of development partnerships. Based on an inclusive and participatory process, these deliberations are expected to produce policy guidance and recommendations that would be broadly owned by the international community.

At a time when there is growing uncertainty regarding the realization of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, the Forum stands as a powerful new mechanism to promote mutual accountability of development partners for aid commitments and aid effectiveness, that are required in order to meet these goals.

The creation of the Forum is also a significant milestone in the implementation of the *global partnership for development*, as for the first time, international development cooperation issues as such will be discussed under the aegis of the United Nations. It is my firm conviction that the Development Cooperation Forum offers an unprecedented opportunity for stakeholders to work together to improve the impact of development cooperation.

Yet, we should be mindful that the results that have the greatest impact are the ones that stakeholders can claim as their own. The Forum will therefore first and foremost strive to engage development partners in a dialogue and consensus-building on how to improve the effectiveness of international development cooperation.

As an instrument of the international community, the Development Cooperation Forum will build on the successes of other important fora such as the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development.

The Monterrey Conference has advanced the global consensus on priorities for more effective development cooperation. In particular, it established that national ownership and leadership is the foundation for successful development cooperation. This was reaffirmed and expanded upon more recently by the Paris High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

Allow me also to use this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the Government of Austria for hosting a preparatory symposium in Vienna in April – [*and to draw your attention to an upcoming symposium to be held later this year in partnership with the Government of Egypt.*] Along with today's

launch, this and foreseen other events are part of the preparations for the 2008 Development Cooperation Forum.

With these words, please accept my warm welcome to the official launch of the Development Cooperation Forum.