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

**Development Cooperation Forum
Vienna High-level Symposium
International Conference Centre, UN Office in Vienna
19-20 April 2007**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great privilege to welcome you to this High-level Symposium jointly organized by the Government of Austria and the United Nations Secretariat.

The Symposium is the first step we are taking together to prepare for the upcoming launch of the *Development Cooperation Forum* in Geneva in July -- as well as the first biennial Forum that will be held in New York in 2008.

The 2005 World Summit mandated the Economic and Social Council to convene a biennial high-level *Development Cooperation Forum* (DCF). The DCF will *review trends* in international development cooperation, including strategies, policies and financing, *promote greater coherence* among the development activities of different development partners and *strengthen the normative and operational link* in the work of the United Nations.

As a key new function of ECOSOC, the DCF provides an important new platform to foster dialogue and consensus on development cooperation policies among a wide range of stakeholders, with the aim of advancing the implementation of the global development agenda. I am convinced that our Symposium here in Vienna will pave the way for the *Development Cooperation Forum* playing such a constructive role.

I am heartened that this Symposium is attended by such a distinguished group of participants from Governments, civil society and international organizations. We have a rich programme ahead of us and I am confident that we will have a highly productive meeting.

The theme of our discussions over the next two days will be “*country-level experiences in coordinating and managing development cooperation*” - a topic of great concern to the international community.

Over the coming two days, we have an excellent opportunity to take stock of both progress and challenges in implementing the new development cooperation agenda at the country-level. I would therefore like to plea with you that we keep our discussions as informal as possible in order to promote a genuinely interactive debate.

I also kindly urge you not only to bring your expertise and experience to our interactions here in Vienna, but also to take the debate and outcome of the Symposium with you to your wider constituency. Together we can build an inclusive and dynamic process that will enable the *Development Cooperation Forum* to fulfill its mandate and have a real impact.

This is why I congratulate the Government of Austria for co-organizing this Symposium and express my warmest thanks to it for hosting this event in the beautiful city of Vienna.

I now have the privilege of asking Mr. Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to deliver his opening statement.