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**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
INFORMAL EVENT FOR THE 2007 ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REVIEW**

**H. E. Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis, President of ECOSOC
United Nations, New York
2 April 2007**

Madame Deputy Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you at today's meeting. I would like to extend my special thanks to you, Madame Deputy Secretary-General, for joining us in this occasion. Today's meeting has special significance as it provides a first opportunity to discuss the theme of the first Annual Ministerial Review, to be held on 3-4 July 2007 in Geneva. Together with the Development Cooperation Forum, the newly mandated Annual Ministerial Review will serve as a benchmark against which our efforts to strengthen the role of ECOSOC as a central body for UN system-wide coordination in the economic, social and related field will be assessed.

Let me recall the context in which the Annual Ministerial Review was originally conceived. It was mandated by the Heads of States and Governments at the 2005 World Summit in response to a disappointing implementation record, as a concrete step to get us back on track in the implementation of the United Nations development agenda.

The Review can serve as a catalyst of implementation in two important ways:

First, by providing a global high-level forum where a systematic review of progress made in the implementation of the United Nations development agenda can take place;

Second, by offering a platform for an exchange of lessons learned and successful practices and approaches which merit scaling-up.

For the Review to realize its full potential as a catalyst of implementation, bringing all the actors engaged in the advancement of the United Nations development agenda together under the auspices of ECOSOC will be central. This requires intense preparation with the full engagement of relevant stakeholders at all levels.

The July Review should therefore not be seen as a one-off event, but as a process, which will lock in the individual review processes that are carried out around the globe at the national, regional and global level. This meeting is an important element of this process.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With this overview of the broader context within which today's event is taking place, I would now like to turn to today's focus. Its purpose is to help the Council kick off the debate on the AMR theme of "*Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development*", which will form an important part of the July meeting.

To help us in our preparations we have the privilege to have with us today a number of distinguished policy makers, practitioners and academics with longstanding experience in the area of poverty and hunger eradication and without further ado I would now like to give the floor to our distinguished speakers to shed some lights on areas of progress and remaining key challenges.

Madame, Deputy-Secretary-General, the floor is yours.