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**OPENING REMARKS BY
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PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON
“ACCELERATING IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH NATIONAL VOLUNTARY
PRESENTATIONS”**

28 JANUARY 2010

Mr. Under-Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to open this very timely expert group meeting on “Accelerating Implementation through National Voluntary Presentations: Next Steps.” I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for organizing such an important and topical Meeting. I would also like to express my most sincere gratitude to the distinguished experts who have joined us here today to assess and advance this crucial mechanism of the Economic and Social Council: the National Voluntary Presentations.

Before elaborating on the NVPs, I wish to emphasize the Council’s strong commitment to play its part in the upcoming General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs to galvanize support for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015. The year 2010 will be critical for the achievement of the MDGs, and I am confident that the AMR process, in general, and particularly the NVPs can make a practical contribution to achieve progress.

The 2005 World Summit mandated the Economic and Social Council to undertake an Annual Ministerial Review of progress towards the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, with a special focus on the Millennium Development Goals.

Subsequently, the General Assembly recommended holding National Voluntary Presentations as part of the AMR.

There has been great enthusiasm about the NVP process. Since its launch in 2007, 21 countries, both developed and developing, have shared their best practices and lessons learned through NVPs at the Council's High-level Segment. For the 2010 AMR, a record number of 14 countries have volunteered to make presentations. As such, the NVPs have clearly demonstrated the value of the Council as a platform for engaging the international community in an exchange of lessons learned in the implementation of national development strategies. They have also highlighted the Council's value as a convener and a forum for mutual accountability.

As the fourth year of the NVP approaches, with the largest number of volunteering countries since its beginning, this meeting provides a unique opportunity to look back upon and assess the NVP mechanism. This discussion will be particularly useful to the deliberations of the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, which will revisit Assembly resolution 61/16 on strengthening of the Council.

This Expert Group Meeting will be instrumental in guiding the next steps of the National Voluntary Presentations, and will plant the seed of the next generation of NVPs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish you the most productive and interactive discussions during the next two days.