

Statement by

H.E. Nestor Osorio, Permanent Representative of Columbia to the United Nations  
President of the Economic and Social Council, to the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the General  
Assembly

Briefing on the Review of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the Strengthening  
of the Economic and Social Council

New York, 5 November 2013

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Under-Secretary General Wu,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to address the General Assembly on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and its implications for the work of the UN system.

As you pointed out in your introduction, the adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/1, on the strengthening of ECOSOC concluded nine months of intensive consultations.

I wish to thank Ambassadors Talbot and Frankinet most sincerely for their insightful and strong leadership. Their hard work and dedication will leave an enduring legacy for ECOSOC and the UN family.

Resolution 68/1 is intrinsically linked to the work begun by the General Assembly with its adoption of resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum (HLPF).

The two resolutions are important pillars in ongoing efforts to put in place the institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the outcome of Rio+20. They are critical building blocks in promoting the balanced integration of the three dimensions of

sustainable development, for strengthening the fight against poverty and for the pursuit of a healthier planet. These actions should be seen as pivotal stepping stones for the arrangements for a post-2015 architecture for strengthening accountability for results.

Mr. President,

You have aptly summarized the essence of resolution 68/1, related to:

- ECOSOC's substantive leadership of the UN system through adoption of an annual theme;
- The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) ministerial level meeting that will be convened as part of the high-level segment of the Council;
- The creation of an Integration Segment to monitor and promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; and also as a contribution to the work of the HLPF; and
- The convening of the segments of the Council throughout the year, with a work programme cycle beginning in July.

This is, indeed, the most far reaching reform of the Economic and Social Council since 1991, when the segment structure of a single substantive session was established.

Mr. President,

The changes that have been introduced in the format and working methods of the Council will: firstly, streamline the substantive work of the ECOSOC system around a main theme; secondly, ensure greater participation, impact and visibility of each segment; thirdly, align the work of all subsidiary bodies of the Council laterally and vertically; and fourthly give the Council the flexibility to convene whenever the need arises for developing collective responses to emerging development challenges.

The convening of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC, as part of the high-level segment, will be a significant complement to the

Council's role and responsibilities related to sustainable development. The intention is to ensure that this meeting generates critical political guidance and direction each year, with respect to the Rio+20 outcomes, leading up to the high-level political forum (HLPF) meeting under the auspices of the General Assembly every four years.

The new ECOSOC Integration Segment will bring the UN system and other stakeholders together to assess, monitor, and make recommendations to promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Its deliberations will also contribute technical and policy inputs to the work of the high-level political forum (HLPF) meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC.

Resolution 68/1 also reorganizes the work of the former Coordination and General Segments around coordination and management meetings. These will now be held at dedicated times throughout the year. This change decongests the substantive session of the Council and allows for better alignment of meetings.

Mr. President,

Allow me to point out the very important work of the Council related to: the operational activities of the United Nations development system, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process; humanitarian affairs and countries in transition; dialogue on the global economy with the World Bank, the IMF and UNCTAD; and the dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions.

These activities will remain significant planks of the work of the Council as mandated by the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The notable improvement is that each will be linked to related processes, such as the meetings of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes. A conscious decision was made, similarly, to link the convening of the dialogue on the global economy with the Spring meetings of the Bretton Woods Institutions.

We must not lose sight of ECOSOC's value as a platform for engaging multiple stakeholders. A critical plank in this strengthened role will be enhancing its public profile.

We will continue our crucial partnerships and youth forums while building new ways of transmitting the outcomes of our work to the public.

Mr. President,

The task ahead of us now is the implementation of resolutions 68/1 and 67/290. This task must take fully into account the continuing efforts of the General Assembly to put in place a fully responsive institutional mechanism for the implementation of the outcome of Rio+20, and to pave the way for a unified, universal post-2015 development agenda.

I see the role of the Economic and Social Council as working hand-in-hand with the General Assembly in shaping the post-2015 development agenda. For its part, ECOSOC must be fit for purpose - and work seamlessly in a renewed, reinvigorated and cohesive manner.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by saying that the Council has over the years successfully shown its ability to promote dialogue with all stakeholders. Its activities related to monitoring and assessment have generated a wealth of lessons that should guide us in making concrete contributions towards defining the post-2015 development agenda. In all these, we will look to the leadership of the General Assembly, the support of all Member States and the participation of relevant stakeholders.

I thank you, Mr. President.