

Message by H.E. Ambassador Néstor Osorio (Colombia)

President of ECOSOC

Regional Preparatory Meeting for Asia and the Pacific

13 March 2013, Bangkok, Thailand

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to address the Regional Meeting for Asia and the Pacific, and to convey the warmest greetings on behalf of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

I regret that I have not been able to be with you in Bangkok, but I will be following very closely your debates.

I sincerely thank the Government of Thailand for hosting this Regional Preparatory Meeting for Asia and the Pacific.

I very much look forward to the presentation of the policy messages from this consultation, at the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review this July in Geneva.

I also would like to thank the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

as well as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and all other UN partners for co-organizing this meeting.

The Review will bring the spotlight on how to harness the power and potential of science, technology and innovation, as well as culture, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and promote sustainable development.

This is a crucial matter at a very critical juncture for the future of development.

Mankind is confronted with enormous challenges that require a change in the way we perceive development.

Current growth models have achieved remarkable results in reducing extreme poverty.

But they have also put us on a path of widening inequality between countries, social exclusion, environmental degradation, climate change, and increasing vulnerability to high food and energy prices.

Such a path ultimately threatens development progress and longer-term sustainability.

New models of development are needed to reconcile economic growth with social needs and environmental boundaries.

Economic growth must be compatible with the well-being of present and future generations.

World leaders acknowledged this simple truth at the Rio+20 Summit held in July 2012.

They have requested that broad-based Sustainable Development Goals be elaborated to guide actions toward this end.

The Rio+20 Outcome confirmed ECOSOC's key role in promoting sustainable development through a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Science, technology and innovation were identified as important elements of viable long-term solutions to sustainable development challenges.

The 2013 Annual Ministerial Review has the important task to follow-up on the Rio+20 Conference Outcomes and to address these mandates.

This is a critical opportunity for the Council to demonstrate that it can indeed deliver in this area.

We must provide an effective platform to discuss concrete measures to articulate and operationalize sustainable development through an integrated agenda.

This year's Annual Ministerial Review theme offers an important opportunity in this regard.

It allows the Council new ways to address some of the most persistent, multidimensional and interconnected challenges to sustainable development and to identify innovative solutions.

At the core of this discussion is the need to ensure that millions of people living below the poverty line are no longer denied the benefits of global development.

The stakes are high and we cannot afford to fail.

It is our duty to ensure that the Council fulfills its role, as mandated by the Charter;

that it becomes an important part of the solution and an authoritative voice in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Today, you have the crucial task to address and discuss sustainable development challenges in the Asia and Pacific region.

You also have the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences in dealing with such challenges in innovative ways.

The focus of this meeting on renewable energy technologies for sustainable development underscores the key role that energy plays in achieving the MDGs.

It also signals the critical importance of this issue for the region, if not for the entire world.

As was also recognized by the Río+20 outcome, "The Future we Want", Energy plays a critical role in the development process, as access to sustainable modern energy services contributes to poverty eradication, saves lives, improves health and helps to provide for basic human needs.

Access to these services is critical for achieving sustainable development.

Energy security continues to challenge policy makers in many countries, especially Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

Making modern energy services available to all is hampered by the lack of adequate financial resources and reliable and affordable infrastructure, among other reasons.

Renewable energy technologies offer the possibility to overcome some of these obstacles.

I trust that you will arrive at recommendations that will enable all countries in the region, but especially the poorest, to achieve an appropriate energy mix for their developmental needs.

I look forward to receiving the results of this important meeting during the High Level Segment of ECOSOC in July.

Your deliberations mark an important milestone in the preparations for the Annual Ministerial Review.

Thank you.