



**H.E. Ambassador Martin Sajdik
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**ECOSOC Special Meeting on Ebola: A Threat to Sustainable Development
5 December 2014**

CLOSING STATEMENT

Excellencies,
Honourable Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to extend my sincere gratitude to our distinguished moderator, panelists and discussants for this enriching discussion on the economic and social impact of the Ebola outbreak. Today's Special Meeting illustrates how we, the international community, Governments, civil society and the private sector, can come together to identify solutions for a comprehensive and coordinated multi-sectoral response to the virus.

As we begin to see a much more optimistic scenario with new cases on the decline wherever the strategy agreed with the affected governments is successfully implemented, we must look towards what must be done to prevent another widespread outbreak of the virus and building the resilience of the affected communities and countries. Amidst these efforts, the African Union's decision on the establishment of an African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention stands to be commended. The proposed African CDC could be instrumental in assisting the region in reducing their communicable disease burden, addressing complex health challenges and responding to emergency situations. In the context of the urgent need to address the effectiveness of global health systems and to build country preparedness, such an initiative should be supported by providing technical support and capacity-building to the Centre.

Today, we also heard calls and support for debt relief for the worst affected countries to help promote early recovery. Debt relief could help affected countries invest in systems strengthening to increase their resilience to future health and other development-related emergencies.

As we continue our efforts to stop the Ebola outbreak, it will be critical to link the emergency response to Ebola to efforts to strengthen national public systems. We may want to reconsider how we provide development assistance to these countries.

Strengthening the public health systems of the affected countries through increased investments and effective capacity building should be one of our priorities.

The Ebola outbreak has not only clearly shown that such epidemics do not respect any borders, but also that there are much larger, cross-sectoral issues involved. Until new flexible mechanisms are set up to deal with the multidimensional nature of such crises, we, the international community, must continue to provide the much-needed financial and technical assistance required by the affected countries for their immediate response and long-term recovery.

All stakeholders, including Governments, the United Nations system, international organisations and civil society actors, must continue to work together towards an integrated and coordinated response to the threat to sustainable development which the Ebola outbreak represents.

I invite the United Nations system to conduct a comprehensive study on the economic and social impact of the Ebola outbreak building on the work being done by the Economic Commission for Africa, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, to be submitted to the Council. I also invite the Member States to submit additional ideas and proposals for follow-up actions.

The invaluable discussions and recommendations which emerged from today's meeting will be compiled into a President's Summary and made available on the ECOSOC website shortly.

Before closing, I would like to express special thanks to Dr. Chan of WHO and the Special Envoy, Dr. David Nabarro for their leadership. Dr. Paul Farmer, your insights on how we could increase the impact of our support to the affected countries should be kept at the forefront of our thoughts. I will continue to count on all of you as we move forward.

Thank you.