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OPENING REMARKS

Statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Mr. Oh Joon, Vice-President of ECOSOC and Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Martin Sajdik, President of ECOSOC and Ambassador of Austria to the United Nations

High-level Segment of ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review and High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

**Opening session
Monday, 6 July 2015**

I would like to start my intervention this morning with a quote from Pope Francis. In his encyclical on the environment that was recently released, Pope Francis said that “Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start”.

We are the ones entrusted with making such a new start. It is a great responsibility, but also something which will make us all proud. We have a real opportunity to eradicate extreme poverty and leave no one behind. We have the possibility to reach all corners of the world to the poorest and most vulnerable and give them a chance to live a life of dignity.

If we want to give the final touch to and implement a universal, transformational and people-centered agenda, we need to change our mindsets. We cannot go on doing business as usual and expect different results

This is why this high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of ECOSOC and this high-level segment week of the Council are so important. We have a responsibility to contribute, through our deliberation, to the process that will chart our way for the next fifteen years and beyond. If we get it right now, we will get it right for generations to come. We will go down in history as the generation that “left no one behind” and secured a better future for its children and their children.

It is therefore essential to be aware of the context in which this meeting is taking place. Negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda are in progress. So are the negotiations on the outcome for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. Negotiators are looking to us to provide insight about the architecture to guide the implementation of sustainable development and poverty eradication – the overarching objectives of the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals.

We have had very fruitful and interesting discussions during the five days of the HLPF last week. It was important to hear views and proposals on how the Forum can be best utilized in the framework for the implementation and follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda. You will hear shortly about the main messages of these five days from our distinguished rapporteurs, the Permanent Representatives of Jamaica and Switzerland and the Executive Secretary of ESCWA.

The programme for the ECOSOC's high level segment week including the three-day ministerial HLPF and the annual ministerial review is set in such a way that it will continue and further deepen what has been discussed thus far, and shed some new light to broaden our collective thinking and provide strategic guidance.

Ministers will have the opportunity to discuss what needs to be done at all levels to implement the post-2015 development agenda and the role all relevant actors, state and non-state. They will identify possible emerging issues and elaborate on the way the HLPF can work in the next 15 years and review and monitor progress.

The HLPF should be the apex of the follow-up and review architecture. Situating the HLPF in the framework of the existing General Assembly and ECOSOC arrangements is important for complementarity, coherence and synergy. We should also reflect on the roles of other existing institutions, uniting and integrating the efforts of all.

We need to discuss and determine how to ensure that we build on strong foundations, starting from the national to regional and global levels. I am sure we will produce tangible ideas and proposals that can strengthen the United Nations and improve the well-being of people everywhere. The UN will only be as strong as our political commitment and resolve.

Making the HLPF work is an integral part of implementing the new agenda. It needs to prove itself as a vibrant new platform that will allow a strong science-policy interface and innovate. It must lead in changing the ‘business as usual’ pattern, injecting new dynamism while working with existing institutions. And it needs to

provide political leadership and guidance for sustainable development and to follow-up and review progress in the implementation of commitments.

It will be important that the HLPF build on the very rich experience and lessons learned from the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review, including, the National Voluntary Presentations. The final AMR national presentations will be made during this high-level week. I commend the Governments of the Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Philippines and Zambia for participating in this year's National Voluntary Presentations. We look forward to in-depth and insightful presentations and discussions, with a view to the future when regular, State-led reviews will be convened within the HLPF.

An integrated agenda will require an integrated vision, particularly at the conceptual level of policy making. ECOSOC can provide the leadership to mobilize the whole UN system, rallying each and every part of the system to complement the HLPF under its auspices.

Let us also ensure that all other stakeholders – from the private sector, civil society, parliaments, academia and philanthropy; indeed all stakeholders – play their expected roles in delivering the post-2015 development agenda. Let's strengthen the platforms for engagement with all of them throughout the system. The

Partnerships Forum can then serve as the platform for follow-up and review of partnerships at the intergovernmental level.

I wish to emphasize the importance of communicating the post-2015 development agenda effectively – this is absolutely necessary for engaging all citizens and other stakeholders in common efforts around our aspirations.

We are on the verge of creating an exceptional deed. Let us get it right. And let us fully use the HLPF, the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the entire UN system to maintain the focus and enrich the policies for the implementation of the ambitious agenda our leaders will adopt in September.

I thank you for your attention.