

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE PRESIDENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
H.E. AMBASSADOR MARTIN SAJDIK

**“High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
under the auspices of ECOSOC”**

**Opening Remarks by the President of ECOSOC
H.E. Mr. Martin Sajdik**

**United Nations, New York
26 June 2015**

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Minister Hundstorfer,
Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Wu,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I open the 2015 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

It is only the second time that the forum meets under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. It does so in a crucial year for the world.

We, the Member States of the United Nations, are charting the path for development for the next 15 years. We are giving its final shape to the outcome document for the September Summit on the post-2015 development agenda. We know very well that without sustainable development there cannot be a lasting improvement in the well-being of humanity.

We have already reached agreement on 17 proposed sustainable development goals. They have poverty eradication and the protection of our planet as their overarching objectives and build on the Millennium Development Goals. They also address the structural causes of poverty and inequality and speak to economic and environmental dimensions. They embrace the pursuit of peaceful, inclusive and well governed societies, building on the rule of law, as integral to the development agenda.

2015 must not be only a year when people and leaders shared a great dream. It must be the year when the world mobilized to realize that dream. It must also be the year when we launched an all-out effort to implement our new sustainable development agenda.

This session can realize three objectives. First, it is a moment to stand back and deepen our reflection on some of the aspects of the post 2015 development agenda we have been negotiating. We can take stock of where we stand in the preparations for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa.

Second, this HLPF is the opportunity to prepare for implementing the post 2015 development agenda, so that we can “hit the ground running” the moment world leaders gavel its adoption. I know some countries have started to adjust their policies – and I look forward to hearing from them. Implementation will also require a major effort to communicate the agenda.

Third, we must use the coming two weeks to ponder how we will keep progress and implementation under review in each country and region and - here on the East River - in the United Nations.

At the global level, the HLPF, which was wisely intertwined with the ECOSOC, will be the focal platform for reviewing progress, building on and benefiting from the deliberations of the ECOSOC system that culminate each year in the Forum as the apex at the end of the Council's cycle.

Our session can help negotiators give shape to the review architecture. And, critically, I hope that we will come out of this session with a common understanding on how the HLPF can get organized to deliver on its important role in the post 2015 era and with a wealth of ideas and proposals.

I have structured the programme so that we deliver on those various objectives. Therefore, we will discuss how the vision of the post-2015 development agenda can be translated into transformative action. We will consider the pivotal role of the SDGs, and ways to mobilize the business sector and civil society as well as education, communication, science and means of implementation. We will also assess whether we are moving fast enough in implementing the SAMOA Pathway and whether we are managing to keep the spirit of Samoa alive.

We will also elaborate ideas and proposals on how best to review implementation, and on how the HLPF can orchestrate review efforts, conduct country and thematic reviews and provide strategic guidance for implementing the agenda. This will be crucial to the credibility and acceptance of the post-2015 agenda within the public - whom we are accountable to. Credibility will also be essential for the involvement of the international as well as national donor community and for encouraging the multi stakeholders to participate in this endeavour.

Our work will be informed by the Global Sustainable Development Report. We will also draw from the outcomes of regional meetings on sustainable development. Major groups and other stakeholders have also prepared papers which contain many ideas and suggestions. The main messages from the first five days will be communicated at the start of the ministerial segment of HLPF. I have asked the Permanent Representatives of Jamaica and Switzerland and the Executive Secretary of ESCWA to serve as high-level rapporteurs for that purpose. This will help Ministers focus on strategic issues related to the implementation and review of the agenda.

These first five-days will thus seamlessly transition into the three-day ministerial segment of the HLPF. As you know, this segment will be held as part of the high-level segment week of ECOSOC which will discuss how to transition from MDGs to SDGs. Furthermore, on 10 July we will have four countries providing the National Voluntary Presentations as part of the high-level segment of ECOSOC. This will enable us to learn for the country review within the context of the post-2015 development agenda which shall take place next year for the first time.

I have been working closely with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to provide you with this structured integrated programme of the HLPF and the high-level segment of ECOSOC. In this regard I would like to express my gratitude to Assistant Secretary General Thomas Gass for the excellent cooperation.

Additional to the formal meetings a SD-Learning event will take place in parallel, from this afternoon until the morning of 2 July. I hope that you will take an advantage of its training opportunities on a variety of topics -- from the economics of sustainable development to tools for implementing the SDGs; modelling; mapping of vulnerability; and climate change.

Many fascinating side events will explore various facets of the theme. I encourage you to look at the calendar on the website of the HLPF.

I am grateful to all of you who have worked hard to bring your ministers and representatives from the capital to this important meeting of the HLPF – and also to the many panellists, lead discussants and moderators who will make our discussions enlightening.

Thank you