

**Key Issues for Post-2015: Conversations between  
WBG Board Members and UN Permanent Representatives  
Monday, 10 March 2014, World Bank Group Headquarters,  
Washington DC**

**Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Martin Sajdik, President of  
ECOSOC (Austria)**

Thank you very much for organizing this important seminar and dialogue between high-level representatives of the United Nations and the World Bank. I am very pleased to address the opening session of the seminar.

It might sound pathetic but there is reason to say that we are at a turning point in our fight against poverty and our quest for dignity, peace and prosperity. In the past thirteen years or so, the MDGs have made a profound difference for millions of people worldwide. Indeed, the MDGs provided significant impetus to the successes we have seen in several areas. Yet, these achievements vary sharply, across and within countries and regions. Unfortunately, some of the goals are likely to remain unrealized in some countries. This is why every effort must be made to accelerate progress towards the MDGs. The MDGs have to remain the priority of our development efforts in the current and next year.

At the same time, we have the opportunity and responsibility to build and expand on the MDGs to address the challenges of a new era. The elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda has gained significant momentum. It is at the heart of the work of our UN family and is drawing more and more attention from the international community with expectations running high.

At the International Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro two years ago – the Rio+20 Summit – Member

States reaffirmed that the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development in all its dimensions is the major challenge that humanity is facing.

There is a convergence of views that we are moving towards a single, ambitious agenda with one set of goals building on and going beyond the MDGs. The challenge is to translate our broad vision into a concise and focused set of goals for sustainable development. This is the important responsibility assigned to our colleagues in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Three weeks ago, the two Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group – Ambassadors of Kenya and Hungary, who - I am glad – are among us – shared a progress report that contains key messages and proposes some focus areas. We will certainly hear more on the work of the Open Working Group from the co-Chairs later during the day.

One of the focus areas of the Open Working Group progress report is on the means of implementation, highlighting the importance of a strengthened global partnership for development. Without a doubt, the post-2015 development agenda will need to be underpinned by a strong and comprehensive financing framework. There is general agreement to build on the Monterrey

Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development. But it should also go further in helping change the way we do business and protect our global commons. The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, established by the UN General Assembly, is currently working on developing options for an effective sustainable development financing strategy. The Committee will submit its report this September. The report should support the third international conference on financing for development to be convened in 2015 or 2016.

The preparation of the post-2015 development agenda is taking place against the background of global economic recovery trends. However, significant uncertainties and risks remain as we have experienced in past days and weeks.

High unemployment remains one of the biggest problems in the world economy, both in developed and developing economies. Among developed economies, the most challenging situation is found in Southern Europe. Unemployment rates have reached as high as 27 per cent in Greece and Spain, with youth unemployment rates surging to more than 50 per cent. In many developing countries, high rates of informal employment as well as pronounced gender gaps in employment remain critical challenges. Hence, there is an urgent need to develop policy measures that are explicitly targeted towards the creation of jobs.

One promising area for job creation lies in promoting green growth. Investment in sustainable infrastructure will, however, require substantial long term investment. Additional private and public resources, both domestically and internationally, will be needed to finance large and growing needs. ODA remains an important and catalytic element in the overall financing for developing countries, in particular to those most in need. Anyhow, public financing will not be sufficient. Governments and multilateral development banks will have need to play crucial roles in helping to incentivize long-term private finance and promote technical cooperation and capacity building in support of inclusive green growth. In order to facilitate partnerships with the private sector an adequate environment must be created, good governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption are essential to achieve this goal.

Access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises makes a major contribution to growth and employment creation in both developed and developing countries. Financial inclusion is a key element of an overall financial sector policy and stable regulatory framework.

Data will be critical to monitor the implementation of the post-2015 process and to ensure that the new development agenda is supported by measurable, comparable and sustainable indicators. The 45th session of the UN Statistical Commission,

completed last week, reaffirmed its central role as the intergovernmental body responsible for indicators. The Commission discussed the data revolution and a number of methodological issues, such as the System of Economic Environmental Accounting, in preparation for the post-2015 agenda. Many developing countries expressed concern about capacity building on both technical and institutional levels. The new data demands will therefore require new investment in statistics, requiring new financing. There is interaction between the Statistical Commission and the Bretton Woods Institutions. I can only invite you to cooperate with this ECOSOC subsidiary body and through it with national statistic offices

Today's seminar will address the important issues of jobs and employment, a financing framework for sustainable development, and the data revolution. This seminar illustrates a new phase of the close and mutually-beneficial dialogue and cooperation between the UN and the World Bank on these matters.

In my capacity as President of the UN Economic and Social Council, I would also like to stress the important role of the ECOSOC to supplement the work of UN General Assembly in moving the deliberations on the post-2015 agenda forward.

Member States have strengthened the capacity of the ECOSOC to contribute to global review, monitoring and

accountability in the post-2015 period. Member States see the Council now firmly established for post-2015 implementation, with its adequate structures for monitoring, review, and follow-up and as a dialogue and policy making platform.

The newly-created High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will provide coordinated leadership and follow-up on sustainable development at the highest level. The first meeting of the Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC will be held from 30 June – 9 July 2014 with a ministerial segment on 7-9 July. It is expected to focus on the preparations of a truly ambitious post-2015 development agenda with the issue of implementation of SDGs at its core.

Through its Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), ECOSOC is advancing an inclusive, global approach to development cooperation post-2015 – one that fits the scale and scope of action required. The DCF is also preparing to promote global accountability for development cooperation commitments post-2015. It can help monitor a renewed global partnership for development and continue to review national mutual accountability and transparency. The DCF is the natural global “home” for such accountability, involving North-South, South-South, triangular and non-governmental cooperation.

As you know, the Council is also a major intergovernmental focal point to follow up on the implementation of the Monterrey

Consensus and Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, in collaboration with major institutional stakeholders. Every year, the Council hosts a Special high-level meeting with the World Bank, IMF, WTO and UNCTAD. This year will this will happen on 14 and 15 April.

Under the overall theme of “Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of financing for sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda”, the meeting will be an opportunity to review major economic trends and prospects, and discuss the mobilization and effective use of financial resources for sustainable development, as well as the global partnership for sustainable development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Together with the other members of the ECOSOC Bureau – some of whom are present here and will participate in today’s discussions – later today we will be meeting with the Executive Directors of the World Bank and the Executive Board of the IMF regarding the preparations for the special high-level meeting in April and the interactions between the ECOSOC and the World bank and IMF in the way forward. I am sure that the presentations and reflections of this morning session – focusing on financing and jobs – will provide very substantive insights into our discussion.

Thank you.

