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THE PRESIDENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
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REMARKS AT THE
2014 ASTANA ECONOMIC FORUM
TRANSFORMATION FOR PROSPERITY? 50 YEARS OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be here to speak to you at the 2014 Astana Economic Forum.

This Forum comes at a challenging, yet interesting and important time. The world has changed much in the last 50 years and continues to evolve at a rapid rate.

For the international community to make a difference – to be able to generate a positive influence that changes people’s lives for the better – we must adapt to the rapidly changing conditions, and rise to the level of our new challenges.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Large transformations have occurred in our world in the economic realm. One is that several developing countries have made tremendous progress in poverty reduction.

Another is with respect to the proportion of global growth attributable to middle-income countries. In the early 1990s, some 75 per cent of total global growth originated in high-income countries. Yet between 2006 and 2010, as developed countries suffered from the financial crisis, some 90 per cent of global growth was attributable to middle-income countries.

2013 was projected to be the first year in which emerging markets collectively accounted for more than half of world gross domestic product (GDP).

This rise of middle-income countries is reshaping the world geo-economic landscape, contributing to a rethinking of international development cooperation outside the traditional North-South paradigm in such areas as development aid, trade, public sector investment and private sector capital flows.

Yet, we have also experienced a range of recent trends and challenges that have reinforced the need to rethink the course of global development. For example, economic, social and environmental challenges have been fueled by:

- food, energy, and financial and economic shocks;
- social upheavals;
- climate change and a growing frequency of natural disasters and associated humanitarian crises; and
- the prevalence of conflict and political transition in different regions of the world.

These global trends have led to calls for more effective multilateral cooperation to ensure that their negative consequences do not threaten people's livelihoods or the sustainability of the planet. The international community must address anew its ability to address such phenomena.

In particular, we must strengthen efforts to place development at the centre of multilateralism. And we must ensure that greater consistency is achieved among the macroeconomic, trade, aid, financial, education, environmental and gender equality policies of all countries, so that development bears fruit for the betterment of all.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this continuously evolving context, the international community is stepping up efforts to formulate a global development agenda beyond 2015.

One of our priority near-term objectives is, of course, accelerating progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The 2015 deadline is coming quickly. We must spare no efforts to ensure that in the next two years we do everything we can to reach these life-saving and life-improving Goals.

At the same time, deliberations have begun on the elaboration of sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda, which will be implemented in our changed international context, full of new and emerging development challenges.

The outcome document of the Special Event of the President of the General Assembly held in September has called for a post-2015 development agenda that is unified and universal. It has reaffirmed the importance of promoting human rights, good governance, the rule of law, transparency and accountability at all levels. It will have sustainable development at its core, yet keep poverty eradication as its highest priority. And it will apply to all countries, developed and developing, while acknowledging their differences in capacity.

To be effective and successful, the new development agenda must be bold in ambition yet simple in design, supported by a renewed global partnership for development. It must be responsive to the complexities, needs and capacities of individual countries. It needs to be inclusive, with a particular emphasis on including women, young people and other marginalized groups. And it must protect the planet's resources.

Guided by this far-reaching vision, we must define a concise set of goals that will capture the imagination and mobilize the world – just as the MDGs have done.

Dear Colleagues,

The coming months for all of us will be focused on preparation and planning for the post-2015 development agenda.

Through this agenda, the United Nations must further promote multilateral coordination, coherence and accountability in the post-2015 era.

The proper functioning of the institutional framework for the review and follow-up work in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, including the new High-level Political Forum, will be more important than ever.

The United Nations system has a vast accumulated knowledge on key priority issues that will be intrinsic to the formulation and implementation of a new global development agenda.

There is also a need for the UN development system to strengthen its effectiveness and relevance in the new development environment. This will involve rethinking, adjusting and strengthening such areas as functions, funding, capacity, partnerships, organizational arrangements and governance.

Monitoring and evaluation will be key to ensuring that policies are well targeted. The current monitoring and accountability framework used for the MDGs will need to be revisited. A new framework will need to be constructed to ensure development results and further enhance the coherence, complementarity and coordination of development cooperation in the post-2015 era. And measurement, data and statistics will need to be improved to provide the basis for sound analysis.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The global development landscape has been changing rapidly, and will continue to do so. As the opportunities, challenges and risks are highly inter-related, a new, broader development framework is needed to address them.

We must place our two major challenges – the fate of human beings and our planet – in the center and mobilize our common resources and energy to effectively deal with them. We have a shared responsibility to do so.

The post-2015 development agenda offers an historic opportunity to change the development paradigm. We must ensure that this agenda is able to distribute benefits to everyone, facilitated by a strong monitoring and accountability framework and partnership for development.

The international community has an important and challenging task at hand.

This Forum is an important stepping stone in our quest for sustainable development, and a world without poverty.

I look forward to thought-provoking and fruitful discussions.

Thank you.