



Statement by

**His Excellency Mr. Martin Sajdik,
President of the Economic and Social Council**

ECOSOC hand-over

**United Nations Headquarters, New York
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Excellencies,
Members of the Bureau,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In January of last year, you entrusted me with the leadership of the Economic and Social Council. Given the reform of the ECOSOC system, including its work cycle, I have had the pleasure of serving the Council for 18 months.

My profound thanks go to my fellow Bureau Members: Her Excellency Ms. María Emma Mejía Vélez of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Khaled Khiari of Tunisia and His Excellency Mr. Oh Joon of the Republic of Korea.

I would also like to thank the former members of this Bureau, His Excellency Ibrahim Dabbashi of Libya and His Excellency Mr. Carlos Enrique Garcia Gonzalez of El Salvador.

I also wish to thank all members of the Council, for your support, constructive engagement and cooperation; the former ECOSOC Presidents Nestor Osorio from Colombia and Miloš Koterec from Slovakia, whose legacy I have strived to build upon; as well as the Secretary-General for his leadership and continued support for the Council.

Excellencies,

As we move forward to a new cycle and presidency, allow me to briefly reflect on the work we accomplished together during my tenure as President in readying the Council for the future we want.

In my opening speech as president of the Council I pointed out that the UN system and ECOSOC must adapt to rapidly changing conditions and rise to the level and expectation of our Charter mandate. I also pledged to bring the Council together in its transition period, in cementing its reform process. Let me express my deep appreciation to those two colleagues who are the real reformers of ECOSOC, Amb. Benedicte Frankinet and Amb. George Wilfred Talbot who facilitated GA resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Council, adopted in September 2013. I hope you are satisfied with the implementation of your ideas.

In the period that followed we were able to achieve several important milestones. In line with the reform mandates, the Council implemented its first full cycle of meetings. We convened the first session of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Council. The second meeting, earlier this month cemented the Forum as an inclusive platform for

dialogue and political guidance on the road to sustainable development, setting a clear vision for the Forum beyond 2015.

Various platforms of the Council have shown their fitness for the responsibilities of the future: the ECOSOC Integration Segment provides a unifying platform to debate policy options for the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

The first Integration Segment in 2014 shaped a new outlook towards urbanization, as evidenced by the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on cities and human settlements, SDG11. And the most recent Integration Segment made it amply clear that the creation of sufficient good quality jobs, especially for the youth around the World, would be critical for the realization of the post-2015 development agenda.

An important recent initiative of the Council has also been the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. For the first time, the Council has been mandated to conduct intergovernmental dialogue on reform of the UN development system. This work, which has been so ably led by Ambassador Maria Emma Mejia Velez, will continue under my successor.

Through the Coordination and Management Meetings, the Council has continued to carry out the wide range of

coordinating functions for all its subsidiary bodies, fostering cooperation and engagement.

ECOSOC's Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) has underlined its importance as focal point within the United Nations system for holistic consideration of issues related to development cooperation and as the global platform for policy dialogue among all stakeholders on the role of development cooperation, in all its forms, I am confident that the post-2015 development agenda will add further momentum to the DCF.

Through the Partnership Forum, the Council has placed increased emphasis on ways in which to mobilize partnerships in support of the post-2015 agenda. Building on the outcome of an ECOSOC special meeting on Ebola, the 2015 Partnerships Forum addressed how partnerships can help strengthen health systems and build resilience to pandemics.

Just last week, the international community took a new pathway in committing to a ground-breaking financing for development framework. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda opens new horizons for the work of the Council, including through an annual ECOSOC forum on financing for development follow-up with universal intergovernmental participation as well as a strengthened Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, a multi-

stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation. I welcome these important innovations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Eighteen months ago I also declared a few priorities for the work of the Council. One of them has been strengthening stakeholder involvement, to create a participatory approach that deepens the role of civil society as an essential partner in development. This year, the number of applications for consultative status has reached new highs, reflecting the further growth in interest to engage with the Council.

Particularly dear to my heart has been engaging the youth. During my tenure the ECOCOC Youth Forum has reached new records in attendance, in the room and outside of it, through social media, involving young people from all corners of the world.

I have been nothing short of impressed by the level of engagement and input that the youth has brought to the UN as part of the forum. One plea from the last meeting that particularly struck me was the call by the young activist, Thandiwe Chama from Zambia, to all of us “to stand on the right side of history”.

The Youth forum has also been a call to all of us to reach out, to engage and communicate our aims to the world.

Thandiwe will have gone back to her hometown of Lusaka and become a true ambassador of ideas, spreading the message of the new agenda within her community and through social networks.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of communicating the aims and goals of our work – and the SDGs we will adopt in September - to the wider public. ECOSOC also needs to make sure that what is discussed in these rooms resonates outside of them. The post-2015 development agenda, the work of the UN and ECOSOC need to have a resounding echo across all channels of communication.

Human rights, the rule of law, youth employment, eradication of poverty and a cleaner environment for our children have been as you know the central elements and driving forces during the tenure of my office, and as much as to speak out for those who so much need our solidarity, the SIDS, the LLDCs and the LDCs.

Excellencies,

Our past work has ensured that the seeds we sow in September fall on fertile grounds. ECOSOC as a multi-stakeholder platform has been instrumental in providing guidance during this time of immense change.

It is ideally placed to meet the demands of the SDGs, and to advance sustainable development for all. The Council is ready to deliver and –recalling Thandiwe’s words – stand on the right side of history.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to USG Wu Hongbo, ASG Thomas Gass, Mr. Navid Hanif and Jennifer De Laurentis and all their team members, as well as to the Division of Sustainable Development for their tireless efforts and assistance. Furthermore, I would like to thank to my team in the Austrian Mission.

Let me thank you all for your collaboration and support during this past year and wish our new President, the incoming Bureau and the Council every success in the coming year.

Thank you.