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**His Excellency Ambassador Oh Joon
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**International Youth Day Event 2015
ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ, New York
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Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you Under Secretary-General Wu for your introduction, and thank you Secretary-General for such inspiring remarks, which I believe, not only speak to all the young people here, but to everyone working to ensure the success of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

I would like to join all of you in celebrating the International Youth Day, including those watching online.

As the Secretary-General has pointed out, 2015 is a momentous year for the United Nations, and the next 15 years will be momentous for the planet and the people of the world.

Young people's engagement in the lead-up to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development has been crucial. However, it will be the continued and enhanced engagement of young people in its implementation that will be imperative to its success.

Youth engagement is not a new concept. Young people have always been actively engaged in their communities and societies. They have been at the fore of change. They have driven forward important revolutions in thinking, in politics, in the economy, and in society.

We know that as the world's future masters, youth are the biggest asset we have; they are the key to sustainable and equitable economies, societies and development.

As such, not only is investment in youth crucial, but the active engagement and involvement of youth in decision making is critical. Unfortunately, we are witnessing today in some places in the world decreasing levels of youth participation in electoral politics.

We must work together to make sure that young people are involved, that our institutions adapt to new realities of all citizens; that our assemblies and parliaments reflect the diversity of their constituencies.

It is therefore essential that we start working together towards a successful implementation of the new development agenda. Young people should be at its core from the very beginning.

Whether you are a young person with steady employment and good prospects, an unemployed youth disillusioned with the prospect of finding a job; a young woman neglected an education, we are one and the same. We must work together to end poverty and ensure sustainable livelihoods. In this interconnected world, we must engage, not only for ourselves, but for each other, in global solidarity.

Ladies and gentlemen;

In February this year the Youth Forum of the Economic and Social Council brought together over 500 young people to discuss the sustainable development agenda. These conversations have been instrumental in ensuring the voice of young people is echoed through these corridors and in the policies and plans that result.

In 2016, when we have the next ECOSOC Youth Forum, as President of ECOSOC, I will do my best to draw on the expertise and ideas of youth in promoting an effective implementation of the new sustainable development goals. I hope to see many of you there, and to look forward to your valuable inputs.

I thank you for your participation today, and I hope to continue to working together, in global solidarity, for people and the planet.

Thank you.