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**71<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly**

**Statement H.E. Peter Thomson,  
Opening Meeting of the Session of the Commission on Social Development**

Ambassador Charwath,  
Members of the Commission,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address the 55th Session of the Commission on Social Development.

I congratulate you, Ambassador Charwath, on your election as Chair, and thank you for inviting me to speak today.

The long-standing work of this Commission to promote people-centered and inclusive approaches to development – including through the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development – has helped to shape and promote key sustainable development concepts, and to lay the groundwork for adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As Governments and partners look to turn the Sustainable Development Goals into action, this Commission has a critical role to play in supporting implementation, and ensuring that this universal masterplan for people, planet and prosperity is implemented over the next 14 years.

Indeed, the decision last year by this Commission to align its thematic review themes with those of the High-Level Political Forum was an important step in defining the role of the Commission, and in bringing much-needed coherence and coordination to UN efforts to support SDG implementation.

The theme of this year's Session – Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all – could therefore not be more timely or important.

As the 2030 Agenda states – eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

Ending extreme poverty by 2030 is also within our reach.

Since 1990, we have seen the number of people living in poverty reduce from 1.9 billion people to 702 million in 2015.

With strategic and coordinated action we can build on the extraordinary progress made under the Millennium Development Goals and put an end to the scourge of poverty.

In line with the theme of this year's Session, I would therefore like to highlight three key cross-cutting strategies to drive implementation action on the scale necessary to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve all of the SDGs by 2030.

Firstly, we need to pursue inclusive and sustained economic growth through investments in our people.

Education is central to these efforts.

As an enabler of sustainable development, education empowers people with the knowledge, skills, and employment opportunities needed to turn the wheels of economic growth.

We must therefore invest heavily in education, and ensure all people – including women and girls, minorities, and young people – receive equitable and quality education as a poverty eradication priority.

Secondly, we must sustain peace. People in conflict-affected countries are amongst our most vulnerable, and at greatest risk of being left behind by global development gains.

Having now recognized that without sustaining peace, sustainable development is not possible, we must now prioritize investments in conflict prevention efforts, protecting human rights, addressing root causes, and building societal and institutional resilience. These are key to creating an enabling environment for sustainable development.

And finally, we need to secure sustainable financing for SDG implementation.

With current estimates showing that achieving the SDGs will require annual investments of between US\$5-7 trillion, it is obviously essential that all sources of public and private funds get tapped into.

Policy and regulatory reforms should therefore be introduced to establish sustainable financial systems that encourage socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable practices.

Implementing such reforms will help position nations to tap into the economic opportunities estimated to be worth at least USD 12 trillion over the next 14 years through sustainable business models.

In pursuing these approaches, establishing strategic partnerships will be vital to bringing key stakeholders together, and ensuring that their SDG implementation efforts are efficient, effective, and coherent.

Excellencies,

With global attention focused on how Governments, the international community, civil society, and the private sector can work together to secure a sustainable future for humanity, the Commission for Social

Development will continue to have a critical role to play, particularly by providing a forum for strategic analysis, the sharing of ideas, and bringing coherence to SDG implementation efforts.

I congratulate the Commission on all that it has achieved and wish you all every success for your deliberations during this Session.

I thank you.