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THE UNITED NATIONS

Opening remarks at the High-level Conference on Financing for Development
and the Means of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development

Doha, Qatar, 18 November 2017

Your Excellency Minister Al Emadi,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address this High-level Conference. On behalf of the Bureau of ECOSOC, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the State of Qatar for hosting this timely event on a topic that is at the heart of the ECOSOC agenda.

Doha is a relevant place to discuss financing for the Sustainable Development Goals. Doha witnessed many milestones in the history of global governance. The Doha Development Round of the WTO began here. Doha was also the host of the 2nd International Conference on Financing for Development and the 18th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Doha is also a city, which attracts creativity. This high-level Conference itself is an innovation in the global follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It is the first joint preparatory meeting for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up (FfD Forum) - the main intergovernmental fora for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are living in a world of rapid transformation and great uncertainty. Governments are faced with increasingly complex and competing challenges in pursuing national development priorities. Their pursuits of long-term development are frequently disrupted by short-term crises or emerging events.

ECOSOC advocates for systemic approach and long-term vision in tackling imminent challenges. It helps keep sustainable development on top of governments' agendas. As home to the HLPF and the FfD Forum, the Council brings together policy-makers across sectoral boundaries under a common objective. However, the convening power of the Council cannot make real impact without change in policy and financing patterns at all levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Financing for Development has long been a concern of the Council. Twenty years ago, the Council initiated interaction with the Bretton Woods institutions with a view to finding solutions to systemic challenges. Such interaction was later institutionalized and became the annual special-high level meeting with a broader range of institutions.

Nevertheless, the disconnect between policy at global level and action at national level remains a major challenge to deliver on global outcomes. The FfD Forum, established by the Addis Agenda, has the mandate and capability to bridge this gap.

The 2017 FfD Forum was an excellent illustration. The Forum brought together a large number of ministers and high-level officials, representing development, finance, investment and tax authorities from both developed and developing countries. The ministerial round tables enabled focused dialogue at strategic and political level, anchored in national experiences. The broad-based participation of governments brought the Council in sync with the major trends and reality on the ground. We have also seen unprecedented engagement of the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as other international financial and trade institutions.

These all contributed to the constructive environment towards a successful outcome of the Forum. It my hope that we keep this momentum moving forward as we prepare for the 2018 FfD Forum. I believe this high-level Conference will help us achieve just that.

Dear colleagues,

Financing is a means to an end. Achieving sustainable development is our ultimate goal. The 2030 Agenda calls upon countries to look at the sustainable development

holistically, step away from the “siloed” thematic approach and focus on interlinkages in the agenda which can enhance the impact of policy innovations. Means of implementation is an integral part of this integrated picture.

At the global level, such interlinkage should be reinforced through both the HLPF and the FfD Forum. The upcoming HLPF offers an excellent opportunity to do so. Central to the HLPF is the voluntary national review process, a mechanism for Member States to report on the progress of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Countries will participate in voluntary national reviews at the 2018 HLPF. Preparations are underway. I encourage participating countries to pay adequate attention to means of implementation in their preparations.

A hallmark of the VNR process has been the inclusive nature of the dialogues, welcoming representatives of civil society, the private sector, local governments and academia to share experiences and lessons learned. We will continue our efforts to enhance such participation next year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Vice-Presidents of ECOSOC, many of whom are in attendance, for their dedication to promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Agenda in the ECOSOC Bureau. Their participation over the next two days will be an important link between this Conference and the Bureau’s upcoming work.

I also wish to thank Mr. Liu Zhenmin, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and his team for their excellent support. The way this meeting was supported by UN-DESA demonstrated the commitment of the Department to fostering coherence in serving Member States.

It is my sincerest hope that this first joint preparatory meeting for both of the HLPF and the FfD Forum, will provide clear guidance to our preparations of both Forums. And I believe you will achieve that.
