



Check against delivery

**Statement by the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council
H.E. Mr. Ferit Hoxha, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania
57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

Monday, 4 March 2013, 10 a.m. (General Assembly Hall)

Mme Chair,
Deputy Secretary-General,
Executive Director of UN-Women,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Let me first convey the sincere regrets of the President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Néstor Osorio, who could not be here today due to other pressing engagements. He sends his best wishes for the session. It is my great pleasure to address the opening of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women. It is heartening to see that so many of you have assembled at UN Headquarters with one common goal: to eliminate discrimination against women and girls and ensure women's empowerment.

Efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women are central to global economic and social development. Indeed, we all are keenly aware of the intrinsic linkages between gender equality and the realization of human rights, and development goals as well as maintenance of peace and security. Our work in these areas will remain less effective without a more determined, pro-active and sustained implementation of the commitments we have made to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Economic and Social Council fully recognizes the contribution of the Commission on the Status of Women in helping us all to comply with our common responsibility. The Commission has a strong track record of important achievements, well-recognized for its successes in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and for being a catalyst that creates opportunities across the intergovernmental landscape to address gender issues.

One example of this catalytic role is the Commission's welcome input to the Council's Annual Ministerial Review. This year, the Council will focus on "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals". I have no doubt that the action-oriented recommendations of the Commission from 2011 on gender equality issues in science and technology will greatly enrich our ministerial deliberations and action in July.

Starting this year and onwards, ECOSOC will devote special attention to the review and assessment of the provisions of the resolution on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of the Operational Activities of the United Nations, including those pertaining to the enhancement of the gender mainstreaming, across and within the United Nations, and

improving institutional accountability mechanisms to provide for more coherent, accurate and effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting on gender equality results. Also, the strengthening of the coordination of gender-responsive operational activities through existing coordination mechanisms at the country level in partnership, where appropriate, with other relevant entities and national stakeholders will in no doubt provide for more accountability and better deliverance of the gender- sensitive programming.

I likewise commend the Commission on examining, next week, the key gender equality issues that should be reflected in the post-2015 development agenda. The timing of your deliberation on this issue is highly pertinent and is well aligned with the work of the Council and the General Assembly. A post-2015 development agenda should encapsulate a gender equality goal as well as integrate gender equality and women's empowerment across all aspects of the agenda. This was a key message of the multi-stakeholder policy dialogue of ECOSOC's Development Cooperation Forum, held in Vienna in December 2012, on "Advancing Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women: Role of Development Cooperation."¹

But as we refine our expectations for the future, it is essential that we do not lose focus on achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. This Commission has made the wise choice to look at challenges and achievements for women and girls in the implementation of the MDGs next year, following a preliminary discussion at the current session. I wish to congratulate you on your strategic approach to focus on both, our immediate goals and our long term vision for the future.

The core of your work at this session will be the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. All three pillars of sustainable development are negatively impacted by violence against women and girls. Gender-based violence must be eliminated and prevented entirely, and I look forward to this session's recommendations.

Distinguished delegates,

At this time, I would like to share with you some thoughts on the current process of strengthening the ECOSOC and the relevance of the process to the whole ECOSOC system, namely the Council itself, its functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies. Without prejudice to the outcome of on-going consultations, let me briefly highlight some reflections on what a strengthened ECOSOC might look like, particularly as it relates to the work of the functional commissions.

First, a strengthened ECOSOC should have firm thematic focus areas and tap into the knowledge and expertise of its functional commissions and specialized agencies. In this context, a stronger link between the Council and its functional commissions is of utmost importance.

Secondly, ECOSOC could review the work of the functional commissions with a view to integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, as mandated by the Rio+20 Conference. For example, the Commission on the Status of Women could focus on the gender perspectives of economic, social and environmental issues, and provide clear recommendations

¹ http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf/vpd_summary.pdf

and technical guidance on how ECOSOC could integrate gender perspectives in the larger framework of sustainable development.

Thirdly, a strengthened ECOSOC should mean regular dialogue among the various bodies within the ECOSOC system. This could mean a more systematic involvement of Chairpersons in intergovernmental meetings, and joint meetings of functional commissions.

These broad proposals will be discussed further at a joint meeting of the Bureau of ECOSOC and the Chairpersons of its subsidiary bodies, to be held later this month. I hope that by that time, the General Assembly consultations on ECOSOC strengthening will have made headway.

Mme Chair,

Before concluding, let me assure you and this Commission of my full personal support and that of the Bureau of ECOSOC. You have a heavy work load ahead of you, and expectations for the outcomes of this session are very high. But I am confident that under your able leadership and with the commitment of all the participants in this session to a life free of violence for all women and girls, everywhere, this Commission will add a resounding success to its record.

Thank you very much.