

**Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Martin Sajdik
President of the Economic and Social Council
at the**

**Expert Group Meeting on the role of the high-level
political forum on sustainable development in the
post-2015 development framework**

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CR 5 (NLB)

Mr. Assistant-Secretary General,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy to be here at the opening of this expert group meeting and would like to thank UNDESA for having organized it.

These are exciting times, for me personally as President of ECOSOC, but I believe also for all of you who are engaged in processes around the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development.

I have the honour to preside over the Council at the time when it must operationalize the resolutions on the reform of ECOSOC and on the first high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Council. It is very important to start on the right footing. This is a tremendous responsibility, but equally also a wonderful challenge!

We need to make sure that HLPF becomes a dedicated platform for advancing sustainable development through review, recommendations and guidance that have a real impact at country level, but also of the whole UN family. We must equip the forum to perform its mandated functions in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs.

So once again, let me state that we are in a period during which ECOSOC is redefining its role and the HLPF is defining its role- under the auspices of the ECOSOC. These processes go both together and both in parallel.

The General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the establishment of the HLPF and resolution 68/1 on the reform of the ECOSOC give us the guideline on how to construct the HLPF. There is a clear mandate for me as President of the ECOSOC. Both resolutions do give space for interpretation. We can use this space for creative, forward looking ideas to establish a Forum that is apt for the Post-2015 agenda. Anyhow, we should remain reasonable in what we can reach.

It is by all means very timely, that we are going to discuss the role of HLPF in the post-2015 development framework. The success of the forum will depend on its impact on integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, agenda-

setting, strengthening the science-policy interface, more evidence-based policies, but most of all on the implementation of the sustainable development goals and the open exchange of experiences of this process. The question is how to achieve this and, make the forum really a new entity for new era of development. An era where engagement and accountability of all actors from developed and developing countries, state and non-state, is extremely important.

We all know that we need a renewed global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and to find solutions to common challenges. We live in an interconnected and intertwined world. We know we have to leave a better world to our grandchildren, a world with equitable, inclusive and environmentally sound societies.

This is within our reach. We need a strong institutional framework to support our efforts. The HLPF is part of that framework. Discussions like this contribute to advancing agreement and understanding. They provide a space where experts, practitioners and decision-makers meet and openly and honestly discuss how to improve strategies and policies so that every single person can feel the impact. We are in the service of humanity. We owe it to people and we owe it to our children, grandchildren and to ourselves.

As President of ECOSOC, I can assure you that you have my full support in trying to find ways to make the forum strong and relevant in the whole structure of the post-2015 development agenda. But it won't happen by itself and without effort. As any new development it is exciting, but it also has its risks. We need to use the present excitement and enthusiasm. We need to put it in very good moulds made of relevant and implementable strategies and policies. We must take a 'long term vision'. Unless we have full engagement of all, all our discussions will just remain that, mere discussions. We cannot afford this. We simply need to act now.

I will leave you with this sense of urgency. I am sure I will enjoy reading the outcome of your discussions.

Thank you all for coming and I wish you a very successful meeting.