

**Closing Remarks by**

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Expert Group Meeting in Preparation for the 2015 and 2016 ECOSOC Cycles of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

5 December 2014

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of this Expert Group Meeting in preparation for the next two cycles of ECOSOC.

I would like to thank all of you for making this event very lively and stimulating, with special gratitude to our speakers and moderators. It proves that the diversity of stakeholders brings a deeper and more sophisticated analysis of the issues at hand.

It would be impossible to summarize in one go, all the important messages that have emerged over the two days. I will therefore not attempt to do so here, as we will prepare a summary of the discussion over the next few weeks.

However allow me to underscore a few key issues in our discussion that, in my view, would need to continue to be addressed over the next two cycles of ECOSOC to ensure a smooth transition to an SDG-based development framework.

It is widely recognized that the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs will have far-reaching implications for the institutional, policy, financial and accountability frameworks that underpin the way we currently do business.

The SDGs encompass a much broader set of issues than those covered by the MDGs. The SDGs will require integrated policy-approaches to count for more complex policy inter-linkages across all levels.

It is also apparent that the emergence of such policy approaches requires a supportive institutional framework and structures. It is still an open question, however, as to what characteristics these frameworks and structures should have.

This is probably the most difficult and most important reflection that needs to take place. The Secretary-General's report on the Thematic Discussion will address on this challenge. Going forward, building on the rich discussion here will help to shed some light on this issue.

A policy framework that can support the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs – and promote the achievement of development results – would need to go well-beyond current approaches.

The transition to the SDGs requires envisioning institutional and policy frameworks that encompass all three dimensions of sustainable development and that are universal and inclusive in scope.

Given the magnitude of challenge, no single institution and organization at this stage has enough knowledge and expertise to be able to manage such a complex task.

Going forward, it will be critical to build on the accumulated knowledge and expertise of a broad range of development actors to produce the required change.

While it is widely accepted that the delivery of an ambitious, integrated and inclusive agenda requires the engagement of a broad variety of development actors. We have, however, yet to agree on what type of partnership arrangements would be most effective to support sustainable development.

This discussion would require a much deeper understanding of the specific roles, level of action, responsibilities and level of accountability of the various development partners vis-à-vis the SDGs.

It would also require a much deeper engagement of these actors in the discussion on the global partnership for development, and in the related discussion on a monitoring and review framework for development results.

Over the coming years, the ECOSOC will have the opportunity to exercise a leadership role in advancing and deepening the discussion and reflection on all of these issues.

Dear Excellencies,

My final point is that we need to act together. We need to ensure that the Council and the HLPF, under its auspices, exercise their roles and effectively support countries in transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs.

General Assembly resolution 68/1 underscores this point in deciding that a main theme - to be determined at the beginning of each ECOSOC cycle - should drive the work of the whole ECOSOC system.

This is critical not only to ensure alignment in the work of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and with the institutional structure established by the General Assembly to support the post-2015 development agenda.

I am personally committed to ensure that DESA will continue to work closely with the all secretariats of the ECOSOC system to ensure this outcome.

Thank you.