

**ECOSOC 2013 - High Level Segment
United Nations, Geneva**

**Wednesday, 3 July 2013
10:00-11:15 a.m.**

Summary

Implementation Forum

H.E. Mr. Néstor Osorio, President of the Economic and Social Council, said that the Implementation Forum provided a dedicated space for focusing on how the Council could serve as a central hub for achieving future goals. It is important to strengthen the role of the Annual Ministerial Review as a tool for integrated and coordinated follow-up through a preparatory process. The Forum could help to emphasize one of the great strengths of the Council, namely bringing together policymakers and mobilizing them to achieve goals so that words could turn into action and boost sustainable development. He suggested that the Council could facilitate this work by recognising civil society and private sector innovations, namely in the area of science and technology. Mr. Osorio said that science, technology and innovation (STI) and culture – in application in sectors including health and sustainable agriculture, among others – had great potential as promoters of sustainable development and could foster access to knowledge and promote the creation of decent jobs.

Mr. Adnan Amin, Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), who served as Moderator for the Implementation Forum, said that the goal of the session was to review concrete initiatives on STI and culture that could be shared and discussed among governments, the private sector, civil society and the UN system.

H.E. Mr. Rolandas Krisciunas, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, highlighted the pollution in and around petroleum stations as a common sustainability challenge facing many local communities. He offered the example of a Lithuanian company that has developed advanced biodegradation technology to chemically neutralize heavily polluted areas. This serves as a good example of how scientific innovation can be put to direct use to improve a common, everyday form of pollution which impacts negatively on local communities.

Mr. Toshihiko Ota, Mayor of Toyota City, Japan, thanked the Council for their support in the aftermath of the east coast earthquake. He discussed the advanced technology used in mobile batteries in the city which successfully facilitate community endeavours, adding that these batteries can be employed as a source of clean, electric energy in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. Mr. Ota also noted that this innovative technology resulted in a 40 per cent reduction in dependency on non-renewable energy sources which ultimately led to a reduction in CO2 emissions and more flexible solutions for citizens' energy needs. He finished his intervention by urging the Council to encourage the widespread use of mobile solutions for a variety of community needs.

Mr. Jim McLay, Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations, New York, began by stating the importance of renewable energy to New Zealand and noting that Pacific island countries had abundant renewable energy resources that were not being fully exploited. He reported that 70 per cent of the energy consumed in New Zealand comes from renewable sources, including solar and wind power. In March 2013, New Zealand collaborated with the EU to host a Pacific Energy Summit, whose aims were to match Pacific leaders and 79 renewable energy projects with major donors and to encourage prompt investment decisions. By the end of the event, commitments worth \$500 million had

been made. New Zealand itself has committed \$65 million to projects in the Pacific countries. Innovation could power investment, and the Pacific region could provide a model for turning ambitious energy projects into reality.

Ms. Carol Lanteri, Permanent Representative of Monaco to the United Nations, Geneva, said that Monaco puts special attention on healthcare and health delivery systems, especially with regard to the fight against tropical diseases. She highlighted the work Monaco had been doing, developing a series of clinics in Senegal, Stage-3 clinics, in order to provide vaccinations against some of the most dangerous parasitical and highly infectious diseases. The clinics are based on a partnership with a Senegalese non-profit organization, selected because of its high-level research into tropical diseases. The sustainability of the initiative is especially important to Monaco, as part of its efforts to strengthen North-South cooperation in medical research and bolster the capacities of developing countries to protect the health of local populations.

Mr. Fouad Mrad, Executive Director of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia's Technology Centre, said that STI could transform societies and increase capacities. In 2012, the ESCWA Technology Centre helped develop a sample commercialization tool, which has been used in four countries. It has also developed an online platform for young companies in need of investment. In total 114 companies registered in just two months and, after mentoring, 34 top companies have agreed to meet regional investors from the Middle East and North Africa region, resulting in a number of investment deals being made. Mr. Mrad suggested that this initiative could be implemented in other regions, aided by stronger international partnerships.

Mr. Amir Dossal, Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Partnerships, said that the previous initiative described by Mr. Mrad of the ESCWA Technology Centre was precisely the kind of partnership needed to meet existing challenges to global development. Organizations such as national chambers of commerce are part of this effort to generate financing for like-minded initiatives. He urged the UN regional commissions to explore the possibility of establishing national centres such as the ESCWA Technology Centre in different regions.

Mr. Cosmo Zavazava, Representative of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), focused on the seemingly limitless utility and applicability of mobile phones as a user-friendly, accessible piece of technology. They are also the technology of the future—able to be adapted in myriad ways—moving from voice to data and transforming the way the world does its business and daily activity. Despite the rapid spread of mobile technology, there are still far too many regions with substantial portions of the population without access. By 2020, ITU would like to see over 95 per cent of the global population using mobile telephones. The International Telecommunications Union is launching a new global initiative, which encourages the use of mobile phones to expand access to healthcare, personal banking and government services, especially for the poor. This new initiative is expected to benefit millions around the world.

Mr. Antonio Prado, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), said that the International Telecommunications Union was an important partner in the region and recalled that they were partnering on several regional cooperation programmes to improve infrastructure, including broadband service. Mr. Prado highlighted the establishment of the annual Latin American and Caribbean School for Policymakers in Science, Technology, Innovation and Broadband, which provides annual training on the design, follow-up and implementation of public policy. In addition, several intergovernmental fora have been organized by ECLAC since 2005, resulting in the issuance of important resolutions and declarations in this area.

Ms. Cristina Navarette Moreno, World Bank Innovation Labs, addressed innovation policy, which is a powerful tool to promote employment, competitiveness and growth. The key challenge is to build an effective and efficient innovation ecosystem, which by definition, is difficult to articulate precisely and touches on a wide array of policy agendas. A related and second challenge is that policymakers often face challenges in designing operative solutions to encouraging innovation. The World Bank is working on a virtual platform emphasising a 'know-how' approach that integrates an information repository and a community of practice. The information repository includes a number of different materials, including statistics and case studies. A virtual global space is being created for users to interact, share experiences and employ the information available. The official launch of the platform will be in October.

Ms. Gretchen Kalonji, Assistant Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), welcomed the World Bank initiative for contributing to information-sharing, while highlighting the need to collaborate and avoid duplication across the various international initiatives with similar intents and purposes. For instance, the European Union implemented a similar platform in 2005 and in 2010 UNESCO launched online the Science Policy Information Network (SPIN) which covers Latin America. Since 2011, UNESCO has attempted to scale up this initiative on a global basis through its project, goSPIN.

Ms. Teresa Jamaa, Representative of Wireless Reach Initiative, said that access to wireless technologies can change people's lives. A new project was recently launched in collaboration with the Spanish University for Distance Learning, with the aim of offering free online training in business development and entrepreneurship. The course, which is offered in Spanish, teaches entrepreneurs how to use some of the latest wireless technologies. There are plans to offer the course in Portuguese and English in the future and to provide certification. In conclusion, she emphasized the importance of creating partnerships to expedite the implementation of this kind of project.

Mr. Hashem Al-Mustafawi Al-Hashimi, the Representative of Qatar to the International Telecommunication Union, said that wireless use could have a positive effect on global development efforts, if used innovatively. Within the framework of recent reform processes in Qatar, the Ministry for Technology and Communication was established, which among other things, coordinates the Government's intensive investment in the creation of an innovative, modern economy. Qatar has also devised a five-year strategy for STI and expanding the requisite infrastructure, and is currently focusing on offering high-speed broadband to 90 per cent of households by 2015.

The moderator, **Mr. Amin**, said that there had been a spectacular growth in renewable energy in just the past few years. At a time when innovation and business models are improving, some significant systemic barriers remain, such as limited information concerning the cost of renewable energy. The cost of solar and wind energy, for example, has decreased and the International Renewable Energy Agency has launched an initiative with a number of key stakeholders to map the costs of renewable energy deployment in order to aid decision making. This could become one of the most effective tools for investment decisions.

Mr. Amir Dossal, Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Partnerships, said that the Implementation Forum serves as a platform to showcase these initiatives. Perhaps the Council should consider creating a global database of these projects to serve as a learning tool. He suggested that information about these projects and their outcomes was published in the form of a database for which a number of the initiatives introduced so far could serve as building blocks. The International Telecommunication Union is also working on a number of projects, which would be worth further discussion in this context.

Keynote Address by the President of Colombia

H.E. Mr. Juan Manuel Santos, President of Colombia, said that the challenges facing humanity have become increasingly complex, yet there are also many opportunities to seize in order to make progress on justice, equality and sustainability. Eradicating poverty and pursuing sustainable development are not independent global challenges but need to go hand-in-hand with concrete action from governments, academia and civil society. Implementation is lacking at every level and the desired results have not been achieved yet, so more needs to be done. Developed countries need to turn words and promises into concrete action. Developing countries are growing twice as quickly and are making difficult reforms which are starting to bear fruit, thus making a significant contribution to development. Given the changing trends in innovation, now is a good moment to look to the developing world for lessons learnt and good practices.

The financial crisis had destabilizing effects across the world, and Latin America had suffered, in particular, as the result of unstable exchange rates. This instability—coupled with growing inequality worldwide in the same period—necessitates that the international community set long-term goals and build the necessary enabling conditions for a secure, sustainable future. The Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals are entirely compatible, even though the former were concerned largely with the developing world and the latter, once formulated, will be truly universal. Colombia is proud to have promoted the idea of the Sustainable Development Goals, based in part, on its commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, prioritizing the eradication of extreme poverty and related deprivations brought about by exclusion from health, education and social policies and services more generally. In Colombia, there have been a number of successes in its own pursuit of these goals – the rate of unemployment has been reduced over the past three years; universal coverage in basic education has been achieved; and huge improvements in using dialogue to draw down the internal conflict have been made. Colombia hopes that the international community will continue to support its efforts in these respects.