

UNITED NATIONS



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**CLOSING REMARKS
BY
MR. SHA ZUKANG
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE 2012 UN CONFERENCE
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)**

Global Preparatory Meeting

New York, 3 April 2012

Ambassador Koterec,
Distinguished guests,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of DESA, I wish to thank you for participating in, and contributing to, this Global Preparatory Meeting.

This Meeting has provided important inputs to the preparations of the Annual Ministerial Review, and this year's theme.

I wish to briefly look back at a few of the important policy messages that have emerged from our many months of preparations, including today.

First, there is clearly a strong consensus on the urgent need for job creation. Prospects for the world economy will remain uncertain if unemployment keeps rising.

We need more coordinated global action to stimulate employment and decent work.

What exactly does this mean?

- It means better policy coherence on the fiscal, monetary, labour, education and social protection fronts, focused on growing economies and creating jobs, especially for the youth.
- It means governments must take a balanced approach, by building momentum for growth, while repairing their finances.
- And it means we must tackle rising inequality if we want lasting social and political stability.

All worthy goals, but how do we achieve them?

More than ever, increasing education and training opportunities to enhance productive capacity, decent work and social protection need to be prioritized.

Progress on poverty and inequality depend on it – and these elements must be part of the post-2015 UN development agenda.

Fortunately, the ILO's Global Jobs Pact already offers a fine road map – at least for the near-term.

It suggests ways to:

- maximize public and private investment in infrastructure;
- develop human capital;
- protect the most vulnerable; and
- begin the transition to a more sustainable growth trajectory.

Yet, policy makers should not rest there.

As engines of growth and job creation, small and medium-sized firms need a favourable business climate with the right regulations, respect for their property rights and support for employee training.

They must be empowered to do what they are best at – entrepreneurship.

The agricultural sector in developing countries is another area of focus. Low levels of investment can stifle productivity. Farmers often suffer from insufficient credit to acquire fertilizer and tools. Meanwhile, poor roads and other infrastructure may result in crops spoiling before they ever reach market.

Likewise, greening our economies deserves greater attention. When adapted to national circumstances, a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication can play a large role in creating jobs in new and emerging sectors, including in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and integrated water management.

As Secretary-General of the UN's upcoming Rio+20 Conference in June – less than 100 days away – I strongly believe that the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – should be the foundation of the UN development agenda.

ECOSOC's Annual Ministerial Review, to be held just weeks after Rio+20, will help sustain momentum.

Because clearly, these two events are closely linked.

It is enhanced productive capacity, employment and decent work that leads to inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth.

Dear colleagues,

The Council has made great efforts in just the past few months to prepare for this year's AMR.

We have seen:

- regional and global preparatory meetings;
- innovative internet “e-discussions”;
- numerous country workshops; and
- multi-sector events, like this year's Partnership Event on youth employment.

Our preparations appear to be right on-track.

I thank Ambassador Koterec and the Bureau for your leadership and I thank all participants for your hard work and contributions.

I look forward to a productive and successful AMR.
