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Statement by H.E. Mr. Milos Koterec
President of ECOSOC

Special ECOSOC Ministerial Meeting
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**Honourable Ministers,
President of the General Assembly
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,**

Good afternoon and welcome to this special Economic and Social Council Ministerial Meeting.

Today our meeting will focus on strengthening the multilateral system to better promote sustainable development.

The issue is very timely and appropriate, coming as it does only a few months after Rio+20. In addition to promising progress on Sustainable Energy for All and green technologies, the Rio+20 outcome document – “The Future We Want” – called for a strengthening of the ECOSOC to foster its successfully integrate the three pillars of sustainable development.

Before starting, I'd like to thank my Bureau colleagues for their support. And, above all, I am deeply impressed by the large presence of Ministers and high level officials. This is certainly a strong message of support for ECOSOC. I am convinced that the Council has a central role in global economic governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world faces many challenges, many of which are becoming increasingly plain to see.

Among other disappointing developments in 2012, the global economy expanded by just 2.8% in the year to the second quarter, its slowest pace since the end of 2009, when the world was in the throes of a difficult recession.

The threat of social unrest looms ever larger, too. In too many countries, good jobs –remain scarce.

Income inequality has been increasing dramatically in much of the rich world. Food prices have climbed by tens of percentage points in recent years, after a century of steady decline. For the world's poorest, this can make the difference between feeding a child or sending her to school.

Honourable Ministers,

These are a few of the reasons why we've gathered here today.

We know that national solutions alone are not the answer to such problems. However, is it possible to reorient multilateral institutions toward greater effectiveness,

From my perspective, we are grappling with the question of how best to deliver development for all. Effectively, this puts us in the midst of redefining the future development work of the United Nations. We want to get this right, especially as we discuss in increasingly concrete terms the shape of the post-2015 development agenda.

Building the Sustainable Future We Want won't be easy. But a solid foundation can only be constructed on shared principles. Fortunately, on the basics there is much common ground:

- Few would question the need for a more sustainable development model — one which does a better job at improving lives now, while imposing a lower burden on future generations to live equally well.
- Few, either, would argue that international efforts have been mixed on sustainable development to date.
- Or that any strengthened multilateral system must do a better job at getting the incentives right. It should also enhance monitoring and accountability to ensure resources are well spent.

So, the question remains – Where do we begin?

The United Nations remains the logical choice, and ECOSOC a natural focal point within the organization itself.

ECOSOC is at the centre of many strong partnerships within the UN family and with other multilateral institutions. On global economic governance, it has a strong history of collaboration with the international financial and trade institutions. As new groupings – such as the G20 – and multilateral arrangements on global economic issues have developed, the Council should ensure that the appropriate consultative framework is in place to ensure a truly global approach to solving challenges in the world economy.

Still, building the Sustainable Future We Want can not be achieved by legislators and diplomats in New York alone.

It is our researchers who will advance the frontiers of knowledge needed for such breakthroughs... It is our businesses which will invent and implement the new

technologies needed to make growth greener... And it is our civil society organizations and philanthropies that will work to ensure that the benefits of progress are widely shared.

ECOSOC recognizes the importance of strong public-private partnerships.

That's why we've greatly increased NGO membership in recent years, strengthened our ties with academia and young people, and engaged the business community like never before.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite such progress, we can't stop now. We need to do much more.

A major systemic rethink is thus in order, as is far greater policy coherence across the economic, social, and environmental pillars.

The whole ECOSOC system needs to be geared towards sustainable development. Agendas, working methods and engagement with other actors should be totally redesigned.

We should resist the temptation to create parallel structures. Indeed, we should renew and revitalize our institutional arrangements. These measures are needed for assuring cohesive, coherent and coordinated collective action. How do we make ECOSOC the hub for collective action on sustainable development?

This meeting is just the first but extremely important step. Your ideas will lay the foundation for our work in the coming months. This includes the General Assembly discussions on ECOSOC, Secretary-General's report on effective follow-up to the conferences and a series of brainstorming sessions.

I strongly urge you to give bold and visionary proposals. Political impetus is needed for redesigning global institutions.

This is our task today and I look forward to hearing ideas and concrete proposals.

Thank you.