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**DRAFT OPENING REMARKS
PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AT PANEL
DISCUSSIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2012 DCF**

**The changing context of Development: What does it mean for Cooperation and
Global Partnership**

New York, 9 February 2012

Excellencies,

Dear Moderators and Panellists,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you.

The July DCF in New York will be one of highlights in the ECOSOC calendar this year.

Today's meeting is kicking off its preparations in New York.

We are not starting from scratch. Two symposiums have been held already to prepare for the DCF – one in Mali and one in Luxembourg.

The DCF has established itself as a vibrant multistakeholder forum to discuss and forge consensus on trends in development cooperation.

The 2012 DCF comes at a particularly exciting time. The development cooperation landscape is changing beyond recognition right in front of our eyes.

For the work of the Council to remain relevant, it is important to respond to the new opportunities and challenge arising from these major shifts.

This is why we decided to devote today to a discussion on *“The Changing Context of Development: What does it mean for Cooperation and Global Partnership”*.

At the outset, it is essential to recognize that traditional development cooperation remains critical to help lift developing countries out of poverty.

Further increases in ODA will be necessary to reach the MDGs in the three short years left till the 2015 target date.

Evidence shows that when used effectively, aid has helped to reduce aid dependency and increased the policy space of developing countries. It is producing long term development results.

Many developing countries have embraced the objective of becoming “aid free”.

Projections, however, suggest that aid will increase much more slowly. ODA should not be a casualty of budget austerity. We must stem aid fatigue.

At the same time, it is necessary to fully tap into the potential of aid to catalyze other kind of development finance.

Non traditional forms of development cooperation have been gaining in importance. Philanthropic giving has soared. Civil society organizations are providing critical resources. Cooperation between developing countries is becoming ever more important. Local authorities are supporting each other, for example through city-to-city cooperation.

In many ways, development cooperation has become a collective undertaking.

The concern for development is pervading many activities. A number of private sector actors are embracing this goal – or at least “no harm principles“- through initiatives such as the Global Compact.

This vibrant development cooperation community is spearheading novel approaches.

If mobilized around national priorities and internationally agreed development goals, their combined efforts might result in a big push in aiding development.

Still, many countries are struggling, as they lack the capacities to coordinate this rising number of development actors. This is particularly true in countries affected by conflict and least developed countries.

Development cooperation today is about meeting longstanding promises and capturing new promises offered by the changing development cooperation landscape.

This was an important message of the Istanbul Conference on least developed countries. The same message came from the recent Busan High-level Forum on aid effectiveness.

Ladies and Gentleman,

We all agree that with only three short years left our focus needs to remain firmly on achieving the MDGs.

Yet, in the run up to Rio+20, we also all agree that development must embark on a sustainable path.

It must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

At the UN and in other international fora we have agreed to a set of principle which are guiding our development cooperation work.

Rio+20 is expected to agree on a set of actions to guide the transition towards a green economy.

This transition has to be thought through a poverty eradication lens. Economic growth has to be sustained. But it should be placed on a sustainable footing.

It is against this backdrop, that this afternoon we will focus on how to gear development cooperation towards sustainable development.

The shift towards sustainable development will have an impact on the future of development cooperation and the way aid is allocated, delivered and used.

We need to gain greater clarity on how these two strands can be brought together. Rio and our discussion of a post 2015 development agenda offer opportunities to do so.

We should fully use the potential of the DCF to promote agreement and understanding on major trends, needed responses and policies that work.

The DCF cannot only help to bring the tracks of sustainable development and development together. It can also help bring different processes together.

We should explore how the work of the DCF could relate to other international fora. For instance, the DCF has been invited to play a role in consulting on the implementation of agreements reached in Busan.

The issues we are grappling with are sensitive, but we cannot avoid these. I urge you to approach them with a constructive approach.

I wish you very fruitful meeting.
