



**Opening Statement by H.E. Mr. Miloš Koterec  
President of ECOSOC**

**Joint Event of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission  
“Partnerships for job creation for young people in  
countries emerging from conflict”**

**4 June 2012, New York**

Distinguished guests,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to this joint event of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. This is a true testament to the commitment to continued cooperation of our two bodies. I am pleased to co-chair today's event with H.E. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission. We would like to reiterate that we are working to forge closer collaboration between our two intergovernmental bodies to help to improve our individual and joint efforts to addressing the specific challenges and needs of countries emerging from conflict.

We are grateful to you, Madame Deputy Secretary-General, for joining us and agreeing to deliver a keynote address on supporting nations in transition, an issue that is one of the key priority areas identified by the Secretary-General.

Our discussions today will focus on youth employment, an issue that is understandably high on the agenda of all governments around the world and one which was discussed at length during the Special Event of the Council Partnerships for More and Better Jobs for Young People in February 2012. Although we do not have good data on unemployment and underemployment rates in countries emerging from conflict, we do know that stability and peace, the foundation of economic and social development, and a prerequisite for economic recovery *is* affected by the pace and nature of job creation. We also know that while the *majority of young people do not get involved in violence*, unemployment and underemployment can cause conflict or lead to youth involvement in criminal activities - such as the drugs trade, armed groups and other illegal trade –

that offer livelihood opportunities. The consequences for countries still emerging from conflict are severe. For this reason, we need to have a sense of urgency.

My hope for this meeting today is that we can continue to build on the discussion held in February on Partnerships for more and better jobs for young people. At that meeting, we learned that better partnerships are needed with each sector focusing on its comparative advantage. We also learned that successful and innovative youth employment schemes typically share several common features: they are well-crafted to the needs and challenges of the local community; they promote practices rooted in firm, empirical evidence; and they are "scalable" — easily copied elsewhere. We were also told that young people themselves must be involved in planning, design, implementation and evaluation of job "programmes" and that girls and young women are still under-represented in these nascent activities. We also learned that financial literacy and youth entrepreneurship are critical inputs for young people to create jobs themselves. We also learned that niche markets for products from developing countries present great opportunities for young people. I hope to hear more today.

I would like to stress the importance of concrete specific proposals that both our bodies to reflect on and in the case of ECOSOC can be incorporated into our draft Ministerial Declaration. In order to ensure that we get the best and most innovative ideas on the table today, I strongly urge all participants to make this discussion as interactive as possible.

Of course, this will not be the last opportunity for the Council to assess how conflict is affecting the implementation of the development agenda. During the upcoming annual session, the Council will discuss a number of issues of interest to you, including mutual accountability in post-conflict countries, among other topics. The Bureau would be happy to share the outcomes with the Commission on how relevant strategies can help support peace consolidation in the countries on your agenda. From the Council's side, we are also cognizant that for development activities to take root, peace and stability is indispensable. This is where the Council can benefit from the experiences and lessons learned by the PBC on how to integrate security and other concerns within a rights-based framework to improve the chances for sustainable development.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my hope that our meeting today will yield innovative recommendations for tackling the many challenges being faced by the young unemployed in countries emerging from conflict. I thank you for your attention. I would like to now give the floor to Ambassador Momen, Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission for his welcoming remarks, before inviting the Deputy Secretary-General to deliver a key note address. Ambassador Momen, you have the floor.