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**Welcoming address by H.E. Mr. Néstor Osorio, President of
ECOSOC**

**ECOSOC Partnerships Forum
PARTNERING FOR INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Wednesday, 24 April 2013

Excellencies,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome all of you to this year's ECOSOC Partnerships Forum. For the sixth year, the Council has reached out to civil society to discuss how we can together help advance the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This year, the Council will be looking at ways to advance these goals by leveraging science, technology and innovation, as well as culture.

Our big task for today is to identify the best policies and best practices that will allow us to harness the benefits of science, technology and innovation for creating jobs, end poverty, reduce inequality and addressing the numerous challenges of sustainable development. Science, technology, innovation and culture have much to offer and can play important roles in transforming our lives. They are not only

important drivers of economic growth, but also vital for achieving social and environmental gains. With this in mind, we must explore together ways to tap into the enormous potential that such advances can provide.

In order for us to take advantage of what they offer, we need to ensure the environment in which they exist allows them to flourish. To function well, this science, technology, innovation, and cultural ecosystem must include political stability, effective institutions, respect for the rule of law, human capital, sound research and education infrastructure, governmental policies, a balanced intellectual property rights framework, adequate funding and strong linkages between public and private innovation actors. We need to ensure that innovation is integrated into national development priorities, not only in the least developed countries but also and in the middle-income countries. In addition to national strategies, there is a need for regional and international frameworks - including the UN and its agencies, funds and programmes - to respond in new ways. South to south cooperation can also be instrumental in this regard. We must also recognize that working with the private sector, civil society and academia is not only necessary but critical.

All partners must work together if we are to make strides in furthering the Millennium Development Goals. This is paramount too and must continue as we begin to put in place a strategy for the post 2015 development agenda. Helping the world's poor, saving people's lives and putting an end to starvation and malnourishment will not be possible in the absence of inclusive and sustained development that empowers people, creates jobs, ensures education for all reduces poverty and

inequality, eliminate gender gaps, and protects our environment. This is perhaps the most important lesson of the past decade.

Technological learning and innovation capacity is critical to enable the provision of essential amenities to all and is therefore fundamental to ensuring overall sustainable development. The absence of such capabilities results in limitations to application of existing technologies in all sectors, including those of public importance such as health, education, agriculture and climate change, to name but a few. Helping countries to build technology and innovation capacity, and strengthening research capacities must therefore be an important international priority. Many of the countries that urgently need to build STI capacities are those that have severe constraints in mobilizing financial resources. An effective strategy of financing for STI development will require sustained domestic and international resource mobilization and the use of innovative mechanisms of financing. This is where the international community, including the public and private sectors and non-governmental organizations, must step in.

Building capacity for STI will require sustained efforts in a number of areas, and I will now mention just a few. Broadening the culture of science, technology and innovation can produce very positive results if they are accessible to all levels of learning as well as to the public through the media, to show how research can drive high technology innovation and wealth creation and solve human needs and problems. Science education should be incorporated into the curricula, from primary and secondary levels to the research undertaken at universities. Partnerships between university research institutes and industry can be instrumental in generating adequate technologies for local societies and in

encouraging the return of skilled labour back to developing countries. And finally, knowledge sharing - both nationally and internationally - is essential for development. This can be promoted through ICTs and broadband networks. In particular, the application of e-learning can increase the effectiveness of education, including its outreach and awareness-raising.

Distinguished Participants,

Today's Partnerships Forum is a very special occasion. We have here, in this Chamber, a unique gathering of member states, representatives of the private sector, foundations and civil society representatives, all with a shared vision of finding innovative solutions to the many development challenges facing us all. At the United Nations we have been long convinced of the need to leverage the contribution of many sources of ideas to achieve the common goals we all share. We are keen to hear your ideas.

In this spirit, it is my hope that our meeting today will yield strong proposals and recommendations for helping countries establish an enabling environment for the promotion of STI. I intend to make the key recommendations and proposals that emerge from these discussions available to ECOSOC's high-level meeting in July. They will certainly serve as an important input for the Ministerial Declaration that will be negotiated and adopted during that meeting.

Let's together seek to find ways to advance the millennium development goals and expand global economic and social opportunities, keeping in

mind those at the bottom of the pyramid - the ones who would most benefit from science, emerging technologies, innovation and culture.