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**Expert Group Meeting in Preparation for the 2015 and 2016 ECOSOC Cycles of  
the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

**New York, 4 December 2014**

**Introductory Remarks by  
H. E. Mr. Martin Sajdik (Austria)  
President, Economic and Social Council**

Excellences,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to participate in this important expert group meeting in preparation for the 2015 and 2016 cycles of ECOSOC. I thank DESA, especially Mr. Wu Hangbo for inviting me in this meeting.

I am especially delighted to see the participation of such a distinguished group of experts, as well as colleagues from a broad spectrum of ECOSOC stakeholders – from Member States, UN system, civil society organizations and the private sector. This sends a clear message that this discussion concerns us all.

This Expert Group Meeting indeed comes at a time of great change for the work of the Council and for the work of those entities, like DESA, that support its preparation.

Over the next couple of years, the new structure of ECOSOC will have the important task to adjust and respond to a new, universal development agenda focused on sustainable development.

The inter-governmental process has made important strides in defining the new agenda, from the Rio+20 Conference to the work of the Open Working Group on the SDGs, and more recently the SIDS Conference in Samoa.

We know for certain the expected scope of the post-2015 development agenda; we must begin to discuss what its implementation will entail.

While the inter-governmental process presses on - with the 20<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties on Climate Change taking place in Lima this week and the Third Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa just around the corner – we need to prepare for supporting a much broader and more comprehensive framework for development.

The new agenda will continue to have poverty eradication as its highest priority. Its scope will span a much broader range of issues than those captured by the MDGs and will apply to all countries, regardless of their stage of development.

As with any transition, we have a unique opportunity to inject fresh thinking to define new and innovative approaches that match the scope of the new development agenda, and the magnitude of the challenges that it intends to address.

Distinguished guests,

The experience with the MDGs has underscored that a goal-oriented agenda *alone* is not sufficient to produce positive change. This requires a comprehensive and integrated policy framework enabled by strong institutions and supported by broad-based partnerships and robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

The next two cycles of the ECOSOC will be critical to fully absorb and integrate the MDG lessons in the work of the Council, and the HLPF under its auspices, to address the challenges of a post-2015 development framework.

The ECOSOC system will indeed have the important task to define the policy and institutional implications of such a development agenda.

This will entail analyzing and understanding the complex linkages between the broad range of policy areas underpinning the SDGs. It will also require greater

understanding of specific institutional changes that would be needed at various levels, to maximize potential policy synergies and reduce trade-offs.

The discussion on integrated policy frameworks, currently focused on the water, energy and food security nexus, is an important starting point in this regard.

It would however need to be expanded to include all dimensions of sustainable development in order to develop into a policy framework that can effectively support the transition from an MDG-based to an SDG-based development agenda.

This effort is critical to enable the Council, and the HLPF under its auspices, to provide effective policy guidance to Member States in implementing the post-2015 development agenda and monitoring progress. To be effective, it would inevitably require the breath of work and knowledge of the entire ECOSOC system.

This expert group meeting will be an opportunity to examine some of these issues. It would especially be an opportunity to tap into the knowledge and expertise of a cross-section of participants to examine the various dimensions and challenges of transitioning towards a post-2015 development framework.

I am confident that you will have a successful and productive meeting, and that your contribution will help address the challenges of the next two cycles of the ECOSOC.

I wish you a lively and fruitful discussion.

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