

26 June 2013

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,
President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the Thematic Debate on Entrepreneurship for
Development**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you to the General Assembly's thematic debate on Entrepreneurship for Development.

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Israel, my good friend H.E. Ambassador Ron Prosor, for leading the efforts in regard of the resolution 67/202, which for the first time explicitly linked the post-2015 agenda with entrepreneurship.

Allow me also to underscore Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's commitment to promote the entrepreneurial spirit as an important tool in the quest to improve the lives of the world's most disadvantaged people.

Finally, let me thank the renowned experts, practitioners, and businessmen and women who will participate in today's panel discussions. We look forward to hearing their valuable insights, and learning from their experience.

Excellencies,

A year ago, world leaders came together in Rio de Janeiro to adopt the historic "Future We Want" document, which established the framing principles of the post-2015 agenda.

For the first time in history, Member States agreed on measures to comprehensively integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development—namely economic, social, and environmental—into a single, fully coherent whole.

In Rio, the General Assembly received additional mandates. In essence, it was given the strategic task of crafting a new, ambitious universal framework to end extreme poverty in this generation and significantly narrow the global gap between rich and poor, without ruining the environmental basis for our survival.

In the Rio conclusions, it was also stated that Governments would not be able to achieve any of this by depending on public resources alone, but only through the establishment of a "broad alliance of people,

governments, civil society and the private sector.” The same document recognized the “critical role of technology as well as the importance of promoting innovation.” Finally, it urged Member States to create, where appropriate, “enabling frameworks” that can effectively harness the ideas and talents of gifted individuals.

Such people, in my view, must be encouraged to stand at the frontline of socio-economic change, in the service of sustainable development.

They are the ones who are often best placed to take the first crucial steps towards breaking the cycle of poverty in their surroundings.

When such a person begins to put his or her idea into practice, it will likely create new jobs and manifestly help boost the local economy—especially in developing countries, where the baseline is lower. As his or her venture expands, it will contribute more and more to fostering community resilience and its members’ empowerment, as they gain the know-how and confidence to improve their standard of living.

Excellencies,

I believe governments should see the promotion of socially-conscious entrepreneurial spirit as a basic duty.

This is particularly important in the context of addressing the demand of humanity to de-couple economic growth from our dependence on carbon-based energy systems. How to effectuate the global move beyond fossil fuels is one of the most complex challenges of our era, and stands at the heart of the post-2015 agenda. In my view, it can be overcome if those endowed with socially-conscious entrepreneurial skills are given the means to leverage cutting-edge scientific and engineering technologies into paradigm-changing products and services.

Excellencies,

There are various ways for entrepreneurial ideas to be put more effectively in the service of the post-2015 agenda, including public-private partnerships—which the United Nations has begun to promote over the past several years.

Three examples come to mind.

First: market price adjustments. These would result from tax and subsidy corrections that take social costs and benefits into greater account. They could apply to investments in cutting-edge green technologies, feed-in tariffs for renewable energy, carbon pricing, and providing export guarantees to riskier markets.

Second: differential pricing. This could entail an agreement by industry leaders to provide discounts for products and services in lower-income settings. In exchange, governments in more developed countries

would work together with businesses to ensure higher pricing is maintained in these markets. Such policies are already being implemented with regards to essential medicines, greatly contributing to the fight against many infectious diseases. They could be expanded to cover other areas of the global economy, in furtherance of the post-2015 agenda—especially its social dimension.

Third: establishing centers of excellence for technological entrepreneurs. Such programs could have governments sponsor consortia of public and private entities to carry out R&D and pre-commercial trials for new technologies. This would encourage innovation, while helping to attenuate the financial risks involved. It could also empower academics and researchers to pair up with entrepreneurs to field-test green-economy ideas, products and services, as well as provide assistance in bringing them to markets.

Excellencies,

I believe the post-2015 agenda will largely stand or fall on whether governments will be able to work together with individuals who embody the spirit of socially-responsible entrepreneurship.

This, in my view, will be a critical feature of the era of sustainable development that is now still in its infancy, in which the merit of innovative ideas that ensure growth within planetary boundaries will become a leading criteria for public honor.

As ambitious as it may sound—as aspirational as it undoubtedly is—I can see no other effective option on the horizon.

Our goal must be to establish a new form of global engagement. Its scope may very well be difficult to grasp, but a definition supplied by the visionary founder of Ashoka, Bill Drayton encapsulates, in my view, what we should aim for: “Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a fish or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionized the fishing industry.”

Thank you very much for your attention.