

REMARKS AS LEAD DISCUSSANT

by

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Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure to be with you today. I wish to thank the excellent panellists and moderator for such an engaging exchange of ideas.

Promoting dialogue on the **governance of sustainable development** will be critical in the coming years. High-level brainstorming meetings – such as this – provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen our joint efforts for overcoming the challenges we currently face.

The **current method of pursuing development goals through sectoral approaches will never be enough** to meet the threats posed by global challenges to sustainable development.

Despite our increasing awareness of these slow-moving, long-term development challenges **we have yet to make the difficult adjustments** necessary in a number of key areas.

Only by **taking a long-term perspective** can we ensure the well-being of future as well as present generations. Given the current global reality, it is now more important than ever to **integrate** – in a concrete way – **the three pillars of sustainable development**.

At the same time, the current **global interconnectedness** forces us to confront unforeseen risks and **acute crises that require effective short-term responses**.

It increasingly seems as if the international community was faced with an **endless series of “shocks”** for which it has been under-prepared. The impact of an extreme climate event on the agricultural yield in one country can raise food prices in another. An unresolved conflict owing to inequality and local grievances can lead to a humanitarian crisis in a neighbouring country.

So long as we do not **put sustainable development at the centre of any solution** to our shared development challenges, shocks and crises will continue to drive the multilateral system.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my belief that **ECOSOC could play a central role** in responding more effectively to emerging challenges.

However, as we all know – and as we are discussing today – the Council will need **to improve its abilities in exercising intellectual leadership and organizing** in order to influence the multilateral system and to increase its effectiveness.

ECOSOC's recent successes in organizing special events in response to urgent global crises should be built on, and it should be **even more proactive and forward-looking** in setting its agenda.

As one **example** of a recent success, I think of the event the Council held this past May under the theme, **“Creating a Sustainable Future: Empowering Youth with Better Job Opportunities”**.

This event provided **a platform for young people to voice their needs and concerns** in an informal dialogue format.

It allowed young people to explore solutions for creating a sustainable future and increasing quality of work for youth, and facilitated the exchange of best practices among Member States, experts and youth representatives.

The youth unemployment event not only addressed the crisis affecting developed and developing countries alike, but also **brought into the Council the views of partners critical to the formulation of effective policy responses** to current challenges, including the academic community, civil society organizations and young people.

The Council might consider **mapping emerging and future challenges** that require an integrated analytical approach, and determine to develop specific capacities in relation to these issues.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The question remains – **what are the tools necessary for making the ECOSOC system the hub** for addressing emerging issues as they arise and the longer-term sustainability challenges?

First, ECOSOC must be able to put forward **a shared analysis of risks**.

Entrusted with the responsibility of **ensuring UN system-wide coherence**, the Council is a natural point of entry for the UN programmes, funds and specialized programmes.

Building on this, ECOSOC should be able to draw on its system-wide reach to **identify cross-cutting global development issues** on which the multilateral system could enhance policy coordination. As part of this, it should also **maximize its convening power**, not only with Member States, but also other stakeholders such as civil society and the private sector to ensure a holistic analysis of risks and possible solutions.

Second, ECOSOC needs to become **a place where agreement can be facilitated more effectively and efficiently**.

While other institutions and informal international groupings might be defined by greater flexibility and simpler working methods, few have been able to match the same **degree of legitimacy that the Council enjoys** among a broad cross-section of Member States.

As the central organ within the United Nations system **for policy formulation and coordination** of international economic, social and other related issues, giving it both absolute and comparative advantages as a forum for inclusive dialogue among the international community.

Third, ECOSOC must take a greater role in **supporting and monitoring the implementation of UN responses to emerging issues**. The Council's original mandate identified it as a principal organ in the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields.

In a more recent development, in the **Rio+20 outcome document** the **Council was acknowledged as a key player** in the achievement of a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. **Enhancing ECOSOC's current toolkit** – such as the Annual Ministerial Review, Development Cooperation Forum and Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review – could help to improve the Council's role in supporting and monitoring integrated UN responses to emerging challenges.

With these changes in hand, it is my belief that ECOSOC – and as a result, the international community – will be on the right track **to improving its role and relevance in times of crisis** and when taking a more long-term view at the global development agenda.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank you again for the invitation to discuss these and other issues and challenges. I look forward to the comments of other Discussants and distinguished representatives of Member States.