

**Statement**  
**by**  
**H.E. Mr. Milos Koterec,**  
**President of the Economic and Social Council**

**ECOSOC Handover Statement**  
**New York, 28 January 2013**

Excellencies,  
Under-Secretary-General for DESA, Mr. Wu  
Members of the Bureau,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last January, you entrusted me with the leadership of the Economic and Social Council. The confidence you bestowed upon me was not just an immense honour but also a tremendous challenge, especially in times of continuing global economic crisis and an urgent need to revitalize this important UN organ. Together, we worked hard so that ECOSOC can effectively address all the mounting challenges and prove its worth in delivering useful outcomes and meeting the growing expectations of the international community who looks to us in the United Nations for help and guidance.

Today I hand over the Presidency of the Economic and Social Council to my distinguished colleague and friend. I wish to offer my sincere congratulations to the Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Osorio on his election as President and offer him my unyielding support. Ambassador Osorio is extremely capable, assiduous diplomat, tirelessly devoted to the United Nations. I can say with greatest confidence that I leave the Council in truly skilled, experienced hands.

In these moments of transition, it is helpful to briefly take a step back to take account on what has and what has not been achieved. Let me therefore share with you some reflections on the Council's past year.

Excellencies,

The year 2012 was a challenging one. The world continued to face dire challenges resulting from serious crises in the social, economic and environmental fields, severely affecting the lives of many people, especially the most vulnerable.

In the face of continued food price volatility, we have had to ask ourselves if high food prices are becoming the "new normal", jeopardizing the survival of many and turning back the development of recent years.

In the global economy, the prolonged impact of the crisis not only led to problems in the North, but continued to put developing economies in danger. Among the most affected by economic downturn and uncertainty are young people. Youth unemployment has skyrocketed in recent years, causing unprecedented youth unemployment rates across the globe. Globally there are 74 million young people unemployed, many of them in the South.

The challenges the world had to cope with in 2012 illustrated once again the need for a strong and effective United Nations. We in ECOSOC have to continue to work hard to deliver on our mandate and bring about a better world.

Distinguished delegates,

In 2012, one of the primary concerns of ECOSOC was young people, who must be among our first partners in building the future we want. Over the past year, ECOSOC strived to better involve young people in its activities, listening to their voices and delivering on their concerns. For the first time we organized a highly successful **Youth Forum** to address the current challenges on the job market. I hope that this initiative marks the beginning of an ever deeper involvement of young people.

Another highlight of the last year was the **Partnerships Event**. In preparation for the AMR, the event focused on partnerships to address youth unemployment. Member States came together in a highly constructive dialogue with the private sector, philanthropies, and civil society organizations. ECOSOC must continue to reach out in this and other ways.

Such engagement is essential for the achievement of our common objectives.

The global jobs crisis was also in the spotlight of last year's **Annual Ministerial Review**, which focussed on the progress made in promoting employment, decent work and productive capacity. The significant convening power of the Council brought together more than 40 Ministers, plus high-level policy makers, accomplished academics and global leaders from the private sector and civil society. Nevertheless, the AMR is not a one time event; it is rather part of a process. Unemployment should continue to be a high priority on the Council's agenda, accompanied by constructive follow-up.

Meanwhile, the 2012 **Development Cooperation Forum** continued to reinforce its place as the most inclusive platform in the development landscape. In July, the Forum brought together a large number of policy makers, NGOs, Members of Parliament, and private foundations. Beyond the attendance of so many, the high quality of the analytical preparations of the DCF laid the ground for the success of the deliberations on the future of development cooperation. Here too, I want to argue for strategically expanding the Forum's scope and influence in order to promote coherence, quality, and accountability of global development cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Through the past year, ECOSOC has demonstrated its potential to be a central piece of the international development framework. This was reaffirmed in June in Rio, when world leaders recognized the key role of ECOSOC in achieving the balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development and committed to its strengthening.

Thus, “**Strengthening ECOSOC**” became an important issue during this past year and will continue to be important during the years ahead. In particular, the ECOSOC Special Ministerial Meeting brainstormed on a very rich number of ideas and ways to strengthen the Council. Others have also advanced creative proposals.

Some of these recommendations, to mention only a few, include:

- Implementing an issues-based approach to promote coherence and a better streamlining of the Council’s work and the efforts undertaken by its subsidiary bodies;
- Ensuring a stronger role of ECOSOC in leading the UN’s efforts to enhance partnerships with civil society, the private sector and academia to address emerging development challenges.
- Convening Council meetings throughout the year, which would increase the visibility of some of the issues
- A more responsive and nimble Council, which could make a big difference in moments of disaster and crisis; and
- A full-time Presidency so that the President could fully devote his or her time to further the work of ECOSOC, which would also raise ECOSOC’s profile.

The brainstorming has been only the very beginning. As I hand over this Presidency, we are moving towards the review of the General Assembly Resolution 61/16 on the “strengthening of ECOSOC”, under the able leadership of Ambassador Jan Grauls of Belgium and Ambassador George Talbot of Guyana. I call upon all of us to muster the political will to implement a meaningful set of forward-looking changes that will enable the Council to reclaim its rightful place as the Charter body. We have to be bold and have the courage to think big.

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Working in the United Nations is all about cooperation between countries and people, and ECOSOC’s past session has once again shown the virtues of our collaboration. I have been extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity, privilege and honour to be part of a team is so skillful, efficient, and committed to our common cause.

I am extremely grateful for the legacy and support of all former ECOSOC Presidents and Bureaux: ECOSOC stand on the cusp of change. I also wish to thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary General for their continuous efforts in support of the Council.

I wish to give my profound thanks to my fellow Bureau Members: H.E. Ambassador Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil from Egypt, H.E. Ambassador Desra Percaya from Indonesia, H.E. Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba from Mexico, and H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias from Spain.

I also wish to thank you, the Ambassadors and delegates for your support, constructive engagement, persistence and cooperation. My word of gratitude to NGOs, civil society, academia and private sector representatives, who actively engage in the Council's work.

Let me extend my deep appreciation to the Secretariat, particularly Jennifer deLaurentis and the whole team of DGACM as well as Mr. Navid Hanif and his team at DESA, for their tireless dedication and amazing support in the preparation and facilitation of our work.

Last but certainly not least, I wish to give my most heartfelt and personal thanks to my committed staff at the Mission of Slovakia, who have worked so very hard this past year in support of the ECOSOC Presidency. It has truly been a privilege for me to have them on my team.

I thank you all and wish our new President, the incoming Bureau and the Council every success in this next year.

Thank you.