

(New York, January 14, 2014)

**Remarks by His Excellency Néstor Osorio, President of the Economic and Social Council,
ECOSOC hand-over, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

Excellencies,

Under-Secretary-General Wu

Members of the Bureau,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A year ago, you entrusted me the unexpected responsibility of assuming the presidency of the Economic and Social Council. The confidence you bestowed upon me was not just an honour but also a great opportunity, especially during this time of transition and urgent revitalization for both ECOSOC and the UN.

My profound gratitude to my fellow Bureau Members: His Excellency Ferit Hoxha of Albania, His Excellency Martin Sajdik of Austria, His Excellency Masood Khan of Pakistan and His Excellency Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman of Sudan.

I'm grateful with the former ECOSOC Presidents and Bureaux, whose legacy I have endeavored to build upon; my recognition to the Secretary-General for his guidance and continuous efforts in support of the Council.

Excellencies,

The past year was both eventful and inspiring. The world continues to evolve and change at a rapid rate. Given this, the ECOSOC began its transformation to adapt to the new world agenda and to rise to the level of new aspirations.

The culmination of these efforts was the adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/1, which brought about the most far reaching reform of the Council since 1991. Preceding it was the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/290, which set up the format and organizational aspects of the High Level Political Forum.

I see the renewed ECOSOC and the High Level Political Forum under the auspices of the Council, as the central pieces of the new architecture for promoting sustainable development.

I believe that with this new structure, ECOSOC has been strengthened to contribute to global monitoring, review and accountability in the post-2015 era.

ECOSOC's new structure, with its segments spread out throughout the year, provides for more focused discussions. The selection of an ECOSOC annual theme offers the opportunity to unite the ECOSOC system and the entire UN development system to focus on specific development issues in a holistic and comprehensive way.

The recently created Integration Segment of the Council will draw upon the outcomes from the other segments, the work of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system. It will bring together Member States and relevant development actors and stakeholders for a broad, in-depth policy discussion on integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development and will provide effective policy recommendations and guidance to that effect.

The years 2014-2015 will be transition years for ECOSOC, as it adapts to its new structure and as the High-level Political Forum begins its work, both of which are part of the institutional preparations in support of the post-2015 development agenda.

As we move forward to a new presidency, allow me to briefly highlight the main outcomes of the Council's work over the past year and to mention some of the work that remains.

The Council's 2013 High-level Segment held in Geneva in July displayed strong engagement by a broad range of stakeholders. The Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) highlighted the important role science, technology, innovation (STI) and culture can play in overcoming 21st century problems such as extreme poverty, inequality and environmental degradation.

The Ministerial Declaration underscored the role of Science, Technology, Innovation and the potential of culture as essential enablers and drivers for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the promotion of the three dimensions of sustainable development, which should be considered as invaluable inputs to the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

During the Council's thematic debate, there was a widely shared view that the post-2015 development agenda should build on the Millennium Development Goals with poverty eradication and sustainable development at its core.

The post 2015-development agenda should put in place a development strategy capable of promoting an inclusive growth with job creation, while guaranteeing environmental sustainability. This is exactly what ECOSOC must achieve through a balanced integration of the

three dimensions of sustainable development; in order to make the mandate established in the outcome document of Rio+20 a reality. In this sense, the post-2015 development agenda must be seen as a universal and inclusive agenda, with specific goals, and set the conditions to ensure that the results achieved are irreversible.

In the context of the post-2015 development agenda there is a need for a renewed and strengthened global partnership for development on the basis of the 8th Goal (MDG-8). The mobilization of financial resources for development and the effective channeling of all these resources will be critical to the implementation of this global partnership. Reverse the decline in real terms of official development assistance and ensure the compliance with all commitments made in these areas should be linked to improving domestic resource mobilization. As stated in a recent report of the World Bank on Financing for Development post-2015, developing countries will need to step up efforts in order to strengthen tax administrations, better harnessing natural resources revenues and curbing illicit financial flows.

The Operational Activities Segment highlighted the progress made in the early implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

The 2013 Humanitarian Affairs Segment examined how we, collectively – as the UN, governments, the private sector, affected communities, and other new actors – can adapt and better respond to the demands of the humanitarian landscape. This facilitated the dialogue on the World Humanitarian Summit in 2015.

This year's General Segment brought a sharper focus to a number of key issues. This included a focus on the implementation of the 10 Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production, mandated by Rio+20, thereby reinforcing the Council's role in sustainable development issues.

On the interface between peace and security, the Council considered lessons learned relating to the transition of a number of African countries emerging from conflict, drawing upon lessons from South Sudan.

Haiti remained central to our focus, as we reviewed tangible progress and continuing obstacles, and extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group. In doing so, the Council has demonstrated its commitment for deepening its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Council also addressed the concerns and expectations facing the Youth. It also provided a platform for generating new partnerships. I would also like to mention the new Implementation Forum, which focused on concrete actions to promote science and technology for development.

Distinguished Delegates,

The commitment to action requires a change of mindset to one where international solutions and national interest ultimately converge. The new institutional architecture for this vision builds on the HLPF, the General Assembly and a strengthened ECOSOC, all acting in unison.

In light of its reformed structure and the new intergovernmental architecture, the Council must now apply the expertise gained from reviewing and monitoring implementation of the MDGs.

With the growing recognition among Member States of the need to further enhance the coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the UN development system as a whole, the monitoring role of ECOSOC will need to also grow in importance.

The Council is in a unique position to contribute to the elaboration and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and to its follow-up. The ECOSOC system has a vast accumulated knowledge on many key development issues providing policy guidance aimed at overcoming obstacles to development. In the post-2015 development framework, the Council could also contribute as a key platform for global monitoring, accountability and coordination of the implementation of the United Nations development agenda.

The Council will forge greater participation from a broad range of relevant stakeholders and promote a strong interface between knowledge and policy. Specific groups, such as youth and private sector partners, must also be part of the dialogue in a more effective way.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to have the ECOSOC we need, the Council, as a convening hub, should produce more real added value and bring greater coherence, collective thinking and global policy making within the UN system, as a key element for a stronger United Nations, able to deal with the different and emerging issues of sustainable development in an effective manner.

Our two fundamental aspirations – improving lives around the world and the sustainability of our planet – must be at the center of our focus and efforts. And we must mobilize our common resources and energy to effectively address them. We have a shared responsibility to do so, the expectations are high and we cannot afford to fail.

Finally I wish to thank all members of the Council, 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 to Ms. Jennifer deLaurentis and the whole team of Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) as well as Mr. Navid Hanif and his team at DESA, for their dedication and amazing support in the preparation and facilitation of our work.

Last but certainly not least, I wish to give my personal thanks to my committed staff at the Mission of Colombia, for its efforts and dedication this past year in support of the ECOSOC Presidency.

I wish to thank all of you for your collaboration and support during this past year.

Today, according to the provisions, I will hand over the Presidency of the Economic and Social Council to a distinguished colleague and friend, Ambassador Martin Sajdik of Austria. I'm sure that the Council will be in truly experienced and skilled hands. Let me express my sincere congratulations for his election and offer him my continuous support.

I wish our new President, the incoming Bureau and the Council every success in the coming year.

Thank you.