

Annual Parliamentary Hearing

United Nations Headquarters

14-15 November 2013

Opening remarks by the President of ECOSOC

Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Mr. President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am truly honored to take part in this global parliamentary dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda, which will have sustainable development at its core.

Indeed, it is particularly timely that the United Nations Economic and Social Council jointly convenes this year's hearing with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the General Assembly as both bodies are actively engaged, from different perspectives, in shaping a new development agenda and in accelerating realization of the MDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The post-2015 agenda is about transformation of societies. Such monumental shifts in the way we produce and consume require engagement by each and every segment of the society. This engagement is needed both in generating global consensus on the agenda and then implementing it.

The Economic and Social Council gives particular importance to engaging a wide range of actors in its work and to ensuring that their voices are heard in the policy-making process.

The Council has already developed a very fruitful cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, particularly in the context of the Development Cooperation Forum where Parliamentarians play an active role in the discussions on the issues at stake. The IPU's priorities fit well with the DCF, which has a focus on multi-stakeholder policy dialogue to strengthen coherence and effectiveness of development cooperation.

With thanks to the IPU, last month's DCF Switzerland High-level Symposium saw a large number of parliamentarians attend and engage with the range of stakeholders. A key message was the need to engage parliamentarians more actively in the deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda. Particular emphasis was put on building effective legislative frameworks for domestic resource mobilization and private investment as well as national mutual accountability mechanisms that should engage all stakeholders.

Parliamentarians will clearly have to play an active role in defining national positions regarding the post 2015 development agenda. It is my strong hope that all Parliamentarians present here today will share with us ideas both on the key contours of the agenda and its implementation.

We realize that robust accountability will be central to effective and timely realization of sustainable development goals. You have a particularly important role to play in this regard. It is a question of translating the UN agenda into law, providing budget allocations and defining an appropriate accountability framework through which each country can monitor its achievements and better assess what remains to be done.

Parliamentarians should be key interlocutors of the United Nations in this endeavor and I trust that when the next development agenda is defined and its follow-up mechanisms established, you will have a visible role in the carrying it forward. .

I also urge you to start thinking already about ways to galvanize your constituencies back home and ways to translate the full potential of the agenda into reality on the ground.

It is the law making bodies that can lay the foundation for stronger integration of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development that will be at the core of the post-2015 development agenda.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Parliamentarians,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Economic and Social Council itself is undergoing a transformation. These ensuring changes will strengthen its ability to not only to be a thought leader but also a central platform for promoting implementation of the post-2015 development agenda

Starting next year, the Council will change its programme and methods of work. The agenda will become more issues based, with a specific focus on the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

An “integration segment” will be organized for the first time in May 2014, with specific reviews of the challenges of integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions into policy making at the national level. I see in this exercise an area in which the views and experiences of Parliamentarians are also of utmost relevance. Effective integration of sustainable development into public policies requires a strong push by those who oversee them in order to go beyond traditional institutional boundaries and bureaucratic routine.

Your work will also deserve to be dully reflected in the proceedings of the newly established High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which is also

convened under the auspices of the Council next year. The Forum is expected to provide political leadership and policy guidance for sustainable development. It will review progress made in the implementation of sustainable development commitments and have an action-oriented agenda. Parliamentarians should be actively involved in this high level event.

In this transformed institutional context, I think that we can all agree to say that this year's Parliamentary Hearing is a starting point for much more regular and focused interaction between United Nations bodies and Parliamentarians on sustainable development issues.

I wish to thank the IPU for its outstanding work in that direction, and I wish you success in your work during this Hearing.

Thank you.