

Statement by H.E. Inga Rhonda King, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

**21th session of the Committee for Development Policy
11 March 2019**

Distinguished Members of the Committee for Development Policy,
Assistant-Secretary-General,
Mr. Chair,
Colleagues,

I am pleased to address this opening session of the Committee for Development Policy. As approximately two thirds of you have been newly appointed and will be participating at the Plenary meeting for the first time, let me warmly welcome you and emphasize that the Economic and Social Council very much appreciates your expertise. In particular, we value CDP as a central platform for innovative and independent thinking at the United Nations.

Over the years, the Committee has provided valuable insights to ECOSOC discussions and made numerous contributions on how to advance domestic and international policies for development.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress what is one of my priorities while in office, which is to improve coordination within the different parts of the ECOSOC system. The Council aims at creating synergy and coherence in its work to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. A principal means for fulfilling this function is through ECOSOC's main theme which shapes its annual programme of work and that of its subsidiary bodies. Through the main theme, ECOSOC can promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and provide guidance to the work of the entire ECOSOC system. The theme of the 2019 ECOSOC Substantive Session is "One world for all: empowering people to build people to build equal and inclusive societies", and in this regard I am looking forward to receiving your recommendations. Given your expertise in various areas of sustainable development you are well positioned to provide solid advice. In addition to your contributions to the annual theme, ECOSOC looks forward to the Committee's recommendations which will feed into the management and integration segments of ECOSOC, as well as the high-level political forum (HLPF). Furthermore, noting an effort of the CDP to ensure coordination, I am pleased that the CDP has invited the Secretaries of the ECOSOC Functional Commissions to attend your plenary session.

I consulted your agenda for this week. You have various important items to discuss and I would like to mention a few. I commend the CDP on the recent work done on "leaving no one behind." I am looking forward to hearing your recommendations on this important issue. Furthermore, I am happy to note that the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) features again in your work programme for the current session. Your input will further increase the value of this instrument, which already provides an analysis of countries' experience on key themes related to sustainable development.

A topic that caught my attention is the one on multilateralism which is currently under threat along several dimensions: a building trade war, stalled global trade talks and the questioning of international institutions by prominent countries. Developing nations are being affected, and aid flows to least developed countries are stagnating. As an independent, multi-disciplinary expert body, the CDP is well placed to develop answers to these and other pressing challenges. In this context, I encourage you to use the discussions during this plenary to identify some concrete recommendations and other issues for further consideration as you decide your research focus for the next few years.

Furthermore, I look forward to your continued outstanding work on the Least Developed Countries. I am aware that the CDP is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the LDC criteria and aims to find preliminary agreement on a new basic structure. I wish you success in your endeavour.

The Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries is coming to an end and the preparations for a new programme of action for 2021-2030 will start soon. I believe that there is scope for the CDP this year to make substantive contributions to a new Programme of Action so that it be enriched by the views of the CDP as the independent experts on the category.

I also note with interest that you will review the application of the LDC category by the United Nations Development System. In this regard, ECOSOC has given a mandate to CDP through its resolution in 2017 and looks forward to your recommendations, in view of the upcoming Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

The CDP is also mandated to monitor the impact of graduation on the development progress of graduating and recently graduated countries and to report to ECOSOC. We look forward to learn from the monitoring reports on the concerned countries, which this year are Angola, Equatorial Guinea and Vanuatu. In this context, I note with interest that this week you will also discuss a support framework for graduating LDCs. In each of the graduation cases, the achievement comes after many remarkable years of advance, and – sometimes – setbacks. What binds these countries together is their ability to ride out the difficulties and continue with the long-term task of sustainably building productive capacities, whilst bringing along the less-advantaged. The support to graduating LDCs is gaining even more importance as more and more LDCs are moving towards graduation, bearing in mind that they still face many challenges in their development.

In your report to ECOSOC, I invite you to be concise, clearly identifying the main messages that require attention and action by the Council so that we can make better use of your inputs. Once again, I welcome the new CDP membership, and wish you success in your plenary deliberations.

Thank you