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**Statement at the 21th Session of the Committee for Development Policy**

**New York, 11 March 2019**

Distinguished Members of the Committee for Development Policy,  
Madame President,  
Mr. Chair,  
Colleagues,

I am delighted to participate in the opening session of the CDP plenary. On behalf of Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, and my colleagues in DESA, I would first like to extend a warm welcome to the new membership of the Committee. I would also like to thank Ambassador King for joining us this afternoon and for sharing ECOSOC's perspective on the work of the CDP and its contribution to the Council's programme.

I have been newly appointed as DESA's ASG for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs. While I am new in my position, I am well aware of the great work that DESA does, as well as the importance of the CDP as our own "think-tank" of independent experts and innovative thinkers. As the Secretariat of the United Nations supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in providing a broad range of analytical products, policy advice and technical assistance, DESA effectively translates global commitments in the economic, social and environmental spheres into national policies and actions and plays a key role in monitoring progress towards the SDGs. Over the decades, our policy analysis and recommendations, including the CDP's policy analysis and recommendations, have helped address many of the world's most pressing socio-economic issues. I look forward to working with you in the coming years on various aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

As you know, this year is a special year for the 2030 Agenda. 2019 marks the end of the first four-year cycle of review set out by the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. Two meetings will be held to examine progress on the 2030 Agenda's implementation: a Ministerial level meeting in July under the Economic and Social Council; and a meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government in September under the UN General Assembly. The September HLPF meeting will be the first in a series of summit meetings which will occur every four years until 2030 and is meant to reconfirm commitments to the 2030 Agenda, provide guidance on how to accelerate implementation and reinforce synergies with other high-level events scheduled for September 2019, such as the 2019 Climate summit and the high-level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

I believe that the CDP is well-placed to contribute to these meetings in multiple ways.

One of the most significant changes brought about by the 2030 Agenda, is the affirmation that, if anyone is left behind, our development is not sustainable, and that we need to work together to find solutions that are sustainable and durable, and that recognize our interdependence. Your analysis and recommendations on this key cross-cutting principle will also allow us to continue to frame a more comprehensive, comparative picture of the VNR coverage.

As Ambassador King pointed out, continuing your voluntary national reviews (VNR) analysis will provide helpful guidance for the thematic sessions of the HLPF. In addition, your findings can help frame the discussions during the VNR Labs. The VNR Labs are an innovative format introduced at last year's HLPF to increase policy learning and exchanges among member states and other stakeholders. We will continue this format this year in July and the insights from the CDP analysis of the 2018 VNRs will be a welcome contribution.

I note with interest the work that the CDP is undertaking with regard to graduating LDCs. Graduation from the category is a testament to a country's long-term socio-economic progress. This year we welcome again the achievements of some LDCs in increasing income, improving human assets and reducing their vulnerabilities. At the same time, while graduation is a remarkable accomplishment, LDC graduates still face development constraints and challenges. The relative improvement in their situation does not mean that they are ready to lose international support. I encourage you to discuss better ways for the UN system and international partners to support graduating countries and to recommend improved graduation procedures, bearing in mind the upcoming new Programme of Action on the LDCs. Also, we should not forget how capacity development work can be undertaken in support of graduating and graduated countries. I am pleased to learn that the work of the CDP and its Secretariat is well regarded in this area.

Many decades after its inception, the CDP remains at the forefront of international development thinking. In the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, I believe the CDP can play an even greater role in deliberations at the United Nations. You may reflect on more ways in which the Committee can be even more relevant and influential within the United Nations and beyond.

I expect the Committee, as an independent advisory body of ECOSOC, to continue playing a critical role with its new membership in shaping the global development agenda.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and recommendations, and to working with you in the coming years.

Thank you.