

Opening statement by  
H.E. Ambassador Oh Joon  
PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

THE DCF BRUSSELS HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM

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Re-thinking development cooperation for the SDGs:  
Country-level perspectives and lessons

Your Majesty, Queen Mathilde of Belgium,  
Deputy Prime Minister Alexander De Croo,  
USG Wu Hongbo,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege for me to speak at the opening of the DCF High-Level Symposium today.

Please allow me to thank Her Majesty the Queen for greeting this event as well as the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium, for hosting this High-level Symposium in preparation for the 2016 Development Cooperation Forum of the UN ECOSOC.

Before I start, first, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to the people of Belgium and all the victims and

their families who have suffered from the recent act of terrorism in this beautiful and vibrant city.

The whole international community stand by the people and government of Belgium, and we will overcome this crisis in solidarity and continue on fight to eradicate terrorism.

I wish to thank again the government of Belgium for its leadership and commitment in holding this symposium despite the difficult situation.

Distinguished Delegates,

Now is the time for all countries to translate the global goals of the 2030 Development Agenda into concrete national strategies and actions.

Following our gatherings in the Republic of Korea in April and in Uganda in November last year, this Belgium Symposium (April 2016) is the last milestone in the run-up to the fifth biennial High-level Meeting of the DCF that will take place in a few months from now.

This July, high-level officials and representatives of multi-stakeholders will meet in New York to highlight the positive developments as well as areas where more responsive

development cooperation is called for. They will be guided by a clear vision for integrated implementation of the SDGs.

The biggest challenge facing developing countries in realizing the new Agenda lies in capacity gaps – the capacities to develop national SDGs, integrate policies, mobilize resources, and deliver the commitments on the ground.

The bold vision of “leaving no one behind” means bigger expectation for international development cooperation to help bridge these gaps, in particular in least developed countries and other vulnerable contexts.

This was also one of the key messages of the Special Meeting of ECOSOC on the issue of Inequality I convened last week in New York.

We had very productive discussions on how we can reduce inequality among and within countries to achieve sustainable development.

Distinguished Delegates,

Let us mark this daunting challenge as a “turning point” by taking this opportunity to move the international agenda forward.

Development cooperation can help tap the potential of all development actors by,

First, localizing the SDGs and building institutional and human resources capacities.

Second, spurring innovation, technology development and knowledge sharing.

Third, promoting private sector engagement for sustainable development impact; as well as strengthening multi-stakeholder approaches, including citizen-based monitoring.

With its broadened scope, development cooperation should also bring more prominent contributions to policy coherence to advance sustainable development at all levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the global level, the Economic and Social Council is leading the efforts to follow up and review the implementation of the SDGs and their means of implementation.

ECOSOC will hold the inaugural Forum on Financing for Development from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> this month to strengthen the financing for development process and follow up on implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

In July, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development(HLPF) will provide the global platform for follow-up and review of 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The Forum will have the theme, “Ensuring no-one is left behind.”

My commitment as ECOSOC President in this critical year is to make sure that the diverse functions of the Council and wider ECOSOC system come closely together to add real value to the ongoing national efforts for sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am motivated already by the distinctive contributions the DCF has made to the 2030 Agenda in its early implementation phase.

The Council has high expectations for this Symposium in this regard.

Let us seize the opportunity to translate our ideas into concrete strategies through development cooperation for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

We can surely make the most of this Symposium and I wish you all very productive two days of discussion.

Thank you. //END//