

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva,
President of the Economic and Social Council,
2023 Development Cooperation Forum
New York, 14 March 2023, 10:00 a.m., ECOSOC Chamber
[Check against delivery]**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests and Speakers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the 2023 Development Cooperation Forum!

How energizing to gather in-person today, with many following on the UN webcast. This is an important year for the United Nations and the world. We do not take this opportunity for granted, to meet face-to-face on the quality and impact of our development cooperation relationships, instruments, innovations and actions.

This eighth biennial DCF comes at a crucial moment. The world is still recovering from the consequences of the pandemic – the worst and most widespread health, economic and social crisis since the Second World War.

We are working to reverse the pandemic’s huge impact on the SDGs. Meanwhile, many countries are struggling with worsening food insecurity, energy shortages and financial challenges. We know that those who have contributed the least to these challenges tend to suffer the most.

The war in Ukraine has exacerbated many of these challenges. Yet, they are also rooted in long-standing structural vulnerabilities that have kept communities and countries exposed to risks and shocks. As the LDC-V Conference last week has made so clear: the Least Developed Countries are among those worst impacted and where international assistance is urgently needed.

The 2030 and Addis Agendas recognized the potential of international development cooperation to address such risks and vulnerabilities across the economic, social and environmental dimensions. Critically, our shared agreements committed us – and can today concretely support us – to align all resources with sustainable development and to leave no one behind, especially those most vulnerable and in greatest need.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Economic and Social Council plays a central role in overseeing our global commitments and identifying areas for collective action. This year, I am honoured to be steering the Council’s contributions – working closely with the Bureau, Member States and key stakeholders – toward a successful SDG Summit and High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development in September 2023, plus a productive preparatory meeting for the 2024 Summit of the Future.

Allow me to suggest how we can make best use of this special 2023 DCF to advance concrete recommendations for enhancing the impact of development cooperation in response to current and future challenges?

First, let us focus on key areas where development cooperation can make a difference in the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable.

Building on the latest policy research and analysis, the 2023 DCF programme highlights three key areas where targeted, risk-informed and resilient development co-operation could reduce vulnerabilities across the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely:

- Strengthening climate adaptation and investing in decent job creation;
- Boosting social protection; and
- Harnessing digital transformation.

Making progress on each of these priorities will require medium-to long-term planning and predictable development cooperation – financing but also capacity support, collective support to policy change and partnership.

Next, let us ensure that the 2023 DCF's recommendations and messages are fully informed by voices representing the diverse spectrum of development cooperation actors.

Since its creation, the DCF has brought State providers from the global North and South to the same table together with developing countries from all regions. At its best, the DCF enhances coordination and coherence across the distinctive modalities of diverse partners and how they can work strategically toward common purpose. For this, OECD/DAC partners need to engage in the DCF at the same level as do our partners in developing countries. We cannot miss this opportunity. Please take this message back to your capitals.

We also need to hear more from key development cooperation actors from other stakeholder groups, including business, philanthropy, civil society, research/academia and local and regional organizations. Many key innovations in development cooperation are being driven by you, which is why your participation is so critical.

Keeping the doors of all ECOSOC meetings fully open to organizations and people from all walks of life is a priority of my Presidency. In particular, it is essential that we hear from organizations working with and on behalf of key vulnerable groups needing special consideration in the current context.

I encourage all participants to speak up, be frank and listen with open minds both during the plenary sessions and in your exchanges with each other on the sidelines during the breaks.

Finally, we can help to lay the groundwork for the milestones ahead by identifying concrete opportunities to collaborate on common challenges.

Please share the policies, practices and initiatives that you are putting into place, including with

your partners. How are you mainstreaming resilience into your development cooperation and partnerships? How have these efforts fared in the current crises? Where have your ideas been ambitious, but the delivery is still a work-in-progress? How can we learn from each other's experiences and where can the international community strengthen its response and support?

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the complex challenges, 2023 provides an opportunity to build a better, more equitable and more resilient global economic and social system.

Let us use this Forum – your Development Cooperation Forum – as part of these efforts and for more effective development cooperation in support of the most vulnerable.

Thank you.