

Mr. Secretary General,
Madam President of General Assembly,
Your Excellency Madame President of the Confederation,
President of ECOSOC,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to speak at this year's high level segment of ECOSOC, which is the first high level segment of a renewed ECOSOC which, I hope, is truly well placed to act as a central coordinating body responsible for reviewing the UN system's contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

It is up to us, its membership, to make ECOSOC the forum for cutting edge discussions, practical recommendations and a real capacity to follow-up on decisions. The ability of the

With poverty and hunger still a daily reality for millions of people across the globe, we must live up to our commitments. We must do more and with greater urgency. And we must break from the mold of business as usual. Or else, the Millennium Development Goals will remain no more but a promise.

The importance of national poverty reduction strategies with a strong sense of ownership cannot be stressed enough. At the same time, in order to see real progress in fighting poverty and hunger, local efforts need the sustained and coordinated support at regional and global levels. What is required is a comprehensive, multidimensional approach.

Sustained economic growth is a major factor in reducing poverty. But growth alone, as we have seen from our own experience, is not sufficient. It does not translate automatically into reduced poverty levels and less hunger. In fact, in most of the rapidly growing economies, inequalities tend to increase as well.

In order to translate economic growth into pro-poor gains on the domestic level, growth must be accompanied by strengthening institutional capacity, equitable delivery of public services, active social inclusion, bridging the gap between urban and rural development, as well as investment in human capital. Empowerment of the poor, of the vulnerable- empowerment in the broadest sense of the word- is extremely important in bringing about a change for the better.

Empowerment happens, among other things, through good governance, effective administration, creating a favourable climate for private initiative, and fostering a vibrant civil society. My country would not be where we are today without our firm commitment to institution building, the rule of law, fight against corruption, and local ownership of the processes.

The importance of empowering women in the context of overcoming poverty and hunger merits a special mention. The productive and creative potential of women who make up over half of the globe's population is a tremendous asset. In Lithuania, for example, we have identified and implemented four priorities for women empowerment: women in decision making; balance between family and work; equal wages policy; and gender roles.

Education and skill acquisition are equally powerful tools in poverty eradication. Lack of education and employment opportunities are among the determinants of poverty's perpetuation from generation to generation, and without added improvements in this field, breaking away from the poverty trap is highly difficult.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To deliver on our commitments to reduce poverty and hunger, we must also tackle the dialectical link between poverty and conflict. It is the fragile states that pose the greatest difficulty in fighting poverty. For post-conflict countries, international assistance is vital to enable them to recover and lay foundations for a sustainable peace. An early withdrawal of international assistance from a post-conflict country in its recovery process can be extremely damaging to the creation of long-lasting peace and thus better lives for many. Unless our efforts to help individual countries are well sustained and predictable, the results will be disappointing - or mixed at best.

In this context I would also like to highlight the importance of addressing the unfortunate situation of “donor orphans”. If unattended, such troubled spots may grow into much bigger problems that can end up being a lot more costly than the assistance originally required.

I trust the ECOSOC can contribute significantly to the work of respective institutions dealing with fragile and post-conflict states. The Peacebuilding Commission can benefit from ECOSOC’s own experience, also taking in mind the work of the *ad hoc* advisory groups on countries emerging from conflict. On the other hand, as the Peacebuilding Commission gathers strength, ECOSOC should also be able to draw on the experience this new UN body, thus ensuring the synergies between their respective activities and improving the effectiveness of both in their areas of comparative advantage.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To add to the list of problems that make fighting poverty a daunting challenge, climate change is increasingly a factor to be reckoned with. When natural disasters strike, it is usually the poor who are affected the most and take the longest to recover. For example, small island developing states have witnessed encouraging economic growth over the past few years, promising better lives for their people. Yet how easy is it to sustain that growth if these islands are under an increasing risk of environmental disasters, or

Time is not on our side. I am therefore pleased to see a renewed interest and a sense of urgency in recognizing that climate change requires a long-term global response. I hope that we will collectively rise up to the challenge and approach the multilateral process ahead of us in a spirit of commitment to action and willingness to compromise.

What I consider extremely important is for our engagement to reduce the effects of climate change and our efforts to combat poverty and hunger to go hand in hand and not be seen as opposing or conflicting tracks. In fact, I believe we need an increasing focus on “green growth” or “climate friendly development” to make sure that environmentally sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction strategies make an integral whole.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The eradication of extreme poverty demands a constructive and truly global partnership of developed and developing countries. The EU to which my country belongs has made major efforts to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Collectively, the

I believe it is urgent to agree on measures that