

Statement by H.E. Marie Chatardová, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

**20th session of the Committee for Development Policy
12 March 2018**

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

I am pleased to address this opening session of the Committee for Development Policy.

As you are aware, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), of which the CDP is part as one of its expert committees, is at the heart of the United Nations system. It is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, and coordinating efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals. ECOSOC is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.

Over the years, under ECOSOC's auspices the Committee has been providing valuable insights to ECOSOC discussions and made numerous contributions on how to advance domestic and international policies for development. In particular, your work on the least developed country category has been pivotal, not only in identifying these countries, but also in devising policies to accelerate their development and their graduation from the category on a sustainable basis.

I consulted your agenda for this week and noted several important items for discussion. I would like to use my time here to share a few thoughts.

In the first place, I note with much interest that the CDP during this week may recommend new countries for graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category. These countries have met the threshold for graduation and could officially leave the LDC list after a transition period. They have, in different ways, made concrete progress in meeting the criteria by which LDCs are measured; namely per capita income, economic vulnerability and human assets. Their graduation prospect is the result of the successes of government development policies and strategies, assisted by the international community, and reflects the evolution of the global economy. While a large number of countries will still remain on the official least developed country list, this prospect of graduation is ultimately a clear sign of social and economic development success, and reflects broad-based human development gains.

In the 47 years since the formation of the LDC category in 1971, only five countries have left the category. Two more, Vanuatu and Angola, will graduate in 2020 and 2021 respectively. 2018 seems to have the potential to be a momentous year, possibly doubling the number of LDC graduates and reducing by over a tenth the number of countries on the LDC list. Thus

this may well be a historic event in the history of the international development system. I wish you success in your deliberations on this most important topic and in ECOSOC, we look very much forward to receive the related Committee for Development Policy's recommendations.

With regards to the monitoring of the development progress of countries graduating and graduated from the LDC category, ECOSOC also looks forward to hear how these countries continued to make progress, and what challenges need to be addressed in each country's graduation process.

I recently requested CDP for substantive inputs to the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which will take place from 9 to 18 July, showcasing the Committee's contribution to the 2030 Agenda in general, and particularly for the SDGs and respective targets that are most relevant to the work of the CDP's mandate. I also invited CDP to provide substantive contributions in preparation for the Integration Segment which will take place from 1 to 3 May to address the theme of "Innovative communities: leveraging technology and innovation to build sustainable and resilient societies". I am looking forward to your inputs in this regard.

I understand that the CDP chose to initiate research and analysis on the voluntary national reviews (VNRs) as a key feature of discussions related to the SDGs and will consider whether it wants to include the analysis of VNRs as a recurring activity for future years. As you know, a hallmark of the VNR process has been the inclusive nature of the dialogues, welcoming representatives of civil society, the private sector, local governments and academia to share experiences and lessons learned. Thus in ECOSOC we welcome very much your discussion on this topic during your plenary meeting and we look forward to your conclusions.

As you know, the SDGs place a great emphasis on 'leaving no one behind.' The fact that the Committee chose "Leaving No One Behind" as the topic of its inputs to the ECOSOC High Level Segment in 2018 and 2019 is very much welcomed. We look forward to your assessment of the principle of ensuring that no one is left behind at the global and local levels, and identify areas requiring urgent attention.

As a final note, I would like to mention that the ECOSOC resolution adopted last year on the CDP report contains various operational paragraphs, taking on board a large number of recommendations contained in the CDP report, particularly on lessons learnt in developing productive capacity and on the United Nations development system organizations' application of the least developed country category, including a new mandate to brief the Council in this regard every four years. Despite some sensitive topics not being taken up by ECOSOC, the taking on board of most of the CDP's recommendations is a welcome trend which speaks of the resonance that the CDP's recommendations have with Member States.

On behalf of the Council, I reiterate our appreciation for the Committee's engagement and continued efforts to provide us with your expert advice on various pressing development issues confronting our world today. I note that this is the last plenary meeting of the current CDP membership, which this year comes to an end. In this regard, I would like to thank you very much on behalf of the Council for your valuable inputs into our discussions over the past years.

I invite your report to be concise, clearly identifying the main messages and recommendations that require attention and action by the Council, particularly in this important year of the triennial review of LDCs.

I look forward to your report, and wish you success in your deliberations.

Thank you