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AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES

The Ambassador,  
Permanent Representative

L'Ambassadeur,  
Représentant Permanent

No. 1848

New York, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Excellency, *Dear Sven,*

I would like to thank you for your letter of 17 March 2016 addressed to me, as Chair of the 54<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development, requesting substantive contribution for the 2016 ECOSOC Integration Segment.

I have the honour to send herewith a document highlighting the relevant elements identified during the 54<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development. The contribution has been finalized with inputs from the Bureau of the 55<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development. I trust it will be a relevant and substantive input to the work of the Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Ion Jinga', written in a cursive style.

Sincerely yours,

**Dr. Ion Jinga**

**H. E. Mr. Sven Jurgenson**  
**Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations**  
**Vice- President of the Economic and Social Council**  
**New York**

## **Contribution to the 2016 Integration Segment**

### 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission for Social Development

Drawing upon the deliberations of the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-fourth session that was held 3-12 February 2016 under the priority theme of “Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world”, this note provides a summary of the Commission’s deliberations as input to the discussions of the ECOSOC 2016 Integration Segment scheduled to take place from 2 to 4 May 2016. The theme for the 2016 Integration Segment is “Implementing the 2030 Agenda through Policy Innovation and Integration”. The note also includes key messages from three panel discussions that the Commission convened on: (a) the priority theme; (b) the emerging issues: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: moving from commitments to results for achieving social development, and (c) the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The note highlights the importance of strengthening the social pillar of sustainable development, the catalytic role of implementing the Copenhagen Declaration for the attainment of the 2030 Agenda, enhanced policy coherence among international, regional and national development initiatives and plans, and the need to pay particular attention to those who are vulnerable or marginalized.

Delegations underscored that, unless it is inclusive, development will not be sustainable. Hence, strengthening the social pillar of sustainable development is central to realizing all Sustainable Development Goals. The Commission highlighted the fact that the three dimensions of sustainable development were inextricably linked and called for coherent policies integrating social, economic and environmental policies in order to achieve sustainable development for all and for the creation of broad policy coalitions and meaningful partnerships, including the active engagement of a broad range of stakeholders. NGOs were encouraged to participate in the work of the Commission. The innovative policies that countries have implemented to achieve the objectives of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action—eradicating poverty, generating productive employment and decent work, fostering social inclusion—have yielded positive results on sustainable development and are therefore very relevant to the ongoing work on policy innovation and integration in support of the countries’ implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

While the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to continue to prioritize and give prominence to the review and follow-up of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, and to pay special attention to social groups such as youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, and family, the Commission is very cognisant of the critical role that it has to play as a forum for contributing to the follow-up of the social dimensions of the 2030 Agenda as well as for the exchange of ideas and strategies that have been shown to be effective at advancing social development objectives. The Commission affirmed its commitment to contribute to the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda by supporting the HLPF Thematic Reviews.

The High-level panel discussion on the priority theme “Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world” highlighted the importance of strong coordination and cooperation at the international, regional and national levels for strengthening social development. A broader sense of international cooperation can inform the deliberations of the Commission and national policies. This would extend to the social aspects of areas such as trade, finance and technology, so that social policies are seen as elements of growth and investment. Panelists emphasised that social development can be affected by international or regional developments. Therefore, international coordination of economic and social policies is crucial for sustainable development. Relatedly, there is a need for better understanding of the interaction between national development strategies and regional or international strategies. Countries must therefore identify mechanisms for refinement, coordination and regulation when strategies conflict. As regards the implementation of the SDGs, leveraging coordination to meet a set of fundamental goals such as those on clean water and sanitation, health, education, and peace, justice and inclusive institutions is a must in order to generate momentum to then achieve all of the goals. There is ample evidence that strong coordination across government ministries is crucial for social development. This entails ensuring a clear plan of action with measurable objectives and goals, clear lines of responsibility as well as a strong monitoring and evaluation system.

Discussions on the emerging issue “Implementing the 2030 Agenda” highlighted a number of issues key to create momentum for SDG implementation, including: strong political will both at the national and local levels; national mechanisms to enhance policy coherence; a platform for sharing good practices and knowledge for mutual learning; broad policy coalitions and effective multi-stakeholder partnership; and resource mobilization. Better synergies between economic and social policies were considered crucial to reducing poverty and inequality. However, creating broad policy coalitions and effective partnerships among Governments, parliaments, CSOs, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders was identified as a key challenge, especially for those countries in which such partnerships do not exist or have not been fully developed. Strengthening policy coherence will require comprehensive and integrated policy analysis, particularly to identify trade-offs and complementarities across sectoral policies. It was suggested that the Commission could be a forum to discuss youth issues, cross-cutting all SDGs and their targets, as well as to ensure the participation of youth in all stages of implementation processes.

The panel discussion on “Implementation of the Post-2015 development agenda in light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” welcomed the recognition of the urgency of including disability and leaving no one behind in international development frameworks that is reflected in the 2030 Agenda. This marks a significant achievement for persons with disabilities who were largely invisible in the framework and implementation of the MDGs. The international community needs to incorporate both a social development and human rights perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to place the rights, perspectives and wellbeing of persons with disabilities at the center of all development efforts. Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations must be involved in all stages of policy and programme design, implementation and monitoring. There was significant support for the establishment of an annual multi-stakeholder panel under the Commission, to discuss, share experiences and review progress in the implementation of the SDGs for persons with disabilities. A proposal was made for the creation of a standing forum on disability and development within the Commission or under the General

Assembly. The possibility of ECOSOC creating a permanent space in which United Nations agencies, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other relevant mandate holders can analyze progress in the implementation of the SDGs, coordinate efforts to ensure coherence of approaches and support States in their reporting to the ECOSOC HLPF was raised. It was also suggested that a high-level technical panel be established to discuss the implementation of the SDGs, ensuring the participation of all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities and their representative organisations.