

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

GLOBAL COMMODITIES FORUM

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Opening Ceremony

Opening remarks

by

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United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Acting Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva

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**Opening remarks by Mr. Michael Møller
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Acting Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva**

**Fifth Global Commodities Forum – Opening Session
“Global value chains, transparency and commodity-based development”**

**Palais des Nations, Room XXVI
Monday, 7 April 2014 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Ambassador Wibowo
Secretary-General Kituyi
Executive Director González
Director-General Balema
Distinguished Ambassadors
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Welcome to the Palais des Nations and thank you very much for the invitation to be part of the Fifth Global Commodities Forum. And thank you to both Ambassador Wibowo and Secretary-General Kituyi for their excellent statements which so eloquently have set out the challenges before us. I would like to place the discussion today in the framework of the United Nations’ broader efforts for peace, rights and well-being for all.

While global value chains has become an increasingly popular concept within international organizations in recent

years, it is highly likely that the debates here will seem technical and complex to many people outside the meeting room. Yet, they are closely connected with the overarching question of what kind of world we want to shape – how do we generate economic growth in a sustainable manner for future generations, how do we share resources equitably to build cohesive societies and how do we protect the rights of all individuals. These are, in fact, also discussions of values and principles.

Expansion of the commodities sector brings enormous opportunities for poverty reduction and social transformation. But all too often we see that it leads to jobless growth and a widening gap between rich and poor.

How to ensure equitable growth is at the core of the current post-2015 development debate: leave no one behind, is the guiding principle, as initially set out in the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. And I believe that it is critical that the discussions here are placed in that frame and seek to feed into that broader debate.

After eight rounds of stock-taking in the Open Working Group in the General Assembly, 19 focus areas have been identified, divided into eight clusters. Many of the topics on your agenda cut across several of those areas. How to ensure appropriate and sustainable funding for progress – regardless of the final development agenda to be defined – is an inescapable challenge. There is a shared understanding that ODA will be insufficient and that growth has to be generated across a variety of areas. The global value chain and how to make it work better for developing countries has to be placed firmly at the centre of that debate.

The focus over the coming two days on transparency could not be more timely. The public demand for good governance and accountability – whether in politics or in business – continues to increase. Consumers want to know where their goods are coming from, that they have been produced sustainably and without corruption, and that taxes are paid. Citizens want to be assured that economic growth is equally shared, based on sound principles. This is a welcome development – and it is in the interest of both policy-makers and the private sector to respond. As we discuss how to generate further financing for the post-2015 development agenda, transparency will be a key parameter.

Through the Global Compact, the United Nations has been actively engaged in supporting greater transparency and facilitating corporate social responsibility. The increased focus within industry to move in this direction is encouraging and the efforts of civil society are indispensable. But we can do better. We need to refine standards, strengthen implementation and sharpen monitoring so we can highlight both good and bad performance. There is no equal to the power of public scrutiny when it comes to providing an incentive for effective and equitable policies.

There is no doubt that your exchanges here will provide valuable input for the wider political and development debates at the global level. As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of UNCTAD later this year, let me start the celebrations a little early by congratulating Secretary-General Kituyi and his team for organizing this highly important meeting, and I wish you all much success over the next two days.

Thank you very much.