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Introductory Statement
by Daniela Bas
Director, Division for Social Policy and Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
concerning agenda items 27 (a), (b) and (c)

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development in DESA, I am honoured to introduce six reports of the Secretary-General and one Note by the Secretariat, which are being considered under agenda items 27 (a), (b) and (c).

Under agenda item 27 (a), entitled “Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the 24th special session of the General Assembly,” your Committee is considering the report contained in document A/68/174. This report presents the main topics discussed by the Commission for Social Development during its fifty-first session. It highlights the discussions on the priority theme of promoting the empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all, noting the central role of empowerment of people as an approach to achieving the overarching goals of the World Summit for Social Development. The report also addresses the special needs of Africa and the least developed countries, as well as progress achieved in the implementation of programmes related to social groups and social integration. It also discusses the effective
integration of the social dimension of sustainable development in the global development agenda beyond 2015.

The report also presents a brief overview of the types of policies and strategies that effectively promote the empowerment of people. It gives particular mention to achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth, enhancing access to social services, decent employment, ensuring the full participation of people in decision-making processes, promoting mechanisms that foster participation, improving access to knowledge and information, creating effective and transparent institutions that are responsive to people's needs, and transforming justice systems and legal frameworks to be fair and non-discriminatory.

While the report notes that attention should be given to the particular disadvantages resulting from the social exclusion of specific social groups, it concludes that the promotion of empowerment, as an approach to advancing social development, should go beyond group-specific approaches and focus on people-centred development.

Further, the report links the implementation of these mutually reinforcing policies to fulfilling the special needs of Africa and the least developed countries, as well as to the effective integration of the social dimensions of social development agenda beyond 2012. It recommends that enhanced efforts be made to address the root causes of poverty, inequality and social exclusion, and to focus on the social drivers of structural change, not only the social consequences of economic or political processes. Finally, the report recommends that the United Nations development agenda, post-2015, give priority to inequality, social inclusion, empowerment and participation, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and social protection.

Mr. Chairman,
Also for consideration under this agenda item 27 (a) is the note by the Secretariat contained in document A/68/215, which is an overview of the Report on the World Social Situation 2013: Inequality Matters.

The forthcoming report builds on the Report of the World Social Situation 2005, which described increasing inequality within and across countries. It goes beyond a presentation of recent trends to analyse the impacts of social and economic inequality on achieving inclusive development.

The report notes that, despite robust economic growth, more than half of all countries with available data have experienced increases in income inequality since 1990. It notes that, while income inequality within countries is significant, differences in mean income across countries are even larger. On the other hand, the report presents progress in reducing inequality in education, healthcare and other dimensions of human development. It notes, however, that these non-economic inequalities remain unacceptably high, and that many social groups remain on the lower end of both economic and non-economic disparities.

The report discusses the intersecting impacts of income and non-income inequalities that often result in the intergenerational transfer of existing disparities. It notes that social disadvantages, such as those associated with levels of education, health or social identity often translate into labour market disadvantages, leading to lower income and reinforcing income inequality over time.

The report concludes that policy matters in addressing inequality. It demonstrates that addressing inequality requires a combination of growth-enhancing macroeconomic policies and redistributive social policies that take a comprehensive and universal approach. It suggests that social and economic policies need to be aligned towards the complementary goals of promoting inclusive growth and decent employment. The report further recommends broader interventions to address access to resources and
opportunities to participate in social, economic and social processes, placing emphasis on the equitable distribution of benefits across countries and individuals.

Mr. Chairman,

**Under** agenda item 27 (b), there are four reports.

The first report, contained in document A/68/61-E/2013/3, reviews good practices in family policy making under the themes established for the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family: confronting family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity.

To reduce family poverty in general and intergenerational transfer of poverty in particular, many Governments have been focusing on social protection programmes, including cash transfers for households, child grants, as well as training opportunities for women to access the labour market. It highlights growing acceptance of adequate work-family balance as important for productivity, employment retention and human development, citing examples of policy such as parental leaves, flexible working arrangements and quality childcare. The report also presents more innovative intergenerational solidarity initiatives, such as support for caregivers and multigenerational living arrangements and intergenerational learning programmes as well as family and parental education.

The report reminds us that family policies are cross-cutting and should aim at empowering families rather than substituting them. It suggests that true empowerment means that Governments, the private sector, family organizations, civil society actors and families themselves cooperate in family-oriented policy design, monitoring and implementation.
The report recommends better cooperation between all stakeholders leading to more effective family-oriented policies as well as wider sharing of good practices in preparation for the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

Mr. Chairman,

The second report contained in document A/68/95 is entitled "The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond." This report reviews good practices and existing approaches to disability-inclusive development, and notes the omission of the concerns of persons with disabilities in the existing international development framework based on the Millennium Development Goals.

It suggests that, this omission has resulted in a lack of specific policy commitments and accountability mechanisms for ensuring that persons with disabilities are included in efforts to reach the Goals.

While this glaring omission remains, the report does note some efforts to address disability in national development agendas, spurred by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Feedback from a cross section of Member States shows some improvement in laws, policies and programmes focused on the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and development. The report notes some progress in the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities as well as progress on accessibility.

Finally, the report suggests steps for effectively integrating disability into development policies at the national, regional and global levels. It recommends that accessibility be a central consideration in the emerging post-2015 development agenda, as an essential investment for sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,
2012 marked the International Year of Cooperatives and the third report contained in document A/68/168, reviews the observance of the Year and discusses the contribution of cooperatives to social and economic development.

The report underscores the significant size and scope of cooperative enterprises across the globe. It highlights that cooperative activities secure the livelihoods of as many as 3 billion people and contribute significantly to national economies, and are estimated to account for between 3 to 20 per cent of gross domestic product. It notes the growing role of social cooperatives in the welfare system.

The International Year of Cooperatives celebrated the cooperative way of doing business, one that emphasizes democratic ownership and control. The report highlighted a wide range of activities that took place throughout the year at national, regional and international levels, focused on raising awareness of the form and function of cooperative enterprises, and creating an enabling environment for the growth and sustainability of cooperative enterprises – both through the evaluation and modification of legislative and policy frameworks and through capacity-building within the cooperative sector.

The report also highlights efforts at the international level to strengthen cooperatives and their role in the development agenda through the development and implementation of an international plan of action.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me turn now to the fourth report “Promoting social integration through social inclusion”, contained in document A/68/169. This report builds on three previous reports on social integration noting that, although social integration has long been endorsed as the overall framework for advancing social development and social policymaking, the goal of achieving socially cohesive societies has not been achieved with many vulnerable groups and individuals remaining excluded from development benefits. Social unrest and persistent inequalities make us more aware of the urgent need for comprehensive policies
and programmes supporting social inclusion, especially in the area of social protection, education and institutions building.

The report emphasizes that social protection is a socio-economic right and a form of institutionalized solidarity indispensable for social integration and social cohesion and should be at the centre of coherent and integrated policy framework. It recommends that a comprehensive educational policy emphasizing shared responsibility and civic education can help in fostering inclusion and promote human rights. The report also recommends establishing national institutions in partnership with civil society and the private sector for implementing, monitoring and evaluating social inclusion policies at the national and local levels.

Mr. Chairman,

For consideration under agenda item 27 (c) is the report contained in document A/68/167 and entitled “Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing.”

This report examines three key priority areas in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002: access to decent work and employment for older persons, elder abuse and violence, and older adults and mental health. The analysis in the report is based primarily on the global outcome of the second review and appraisal of the Plan of Action held during the fifty-first session of the Commission for Social Development.

The report concludes that, 10 years after the adoption of the Madrid Plan of Action, in many societies, older persons are still faced by lingering prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices. This “ageism,” as many have come to call it, continues to undermine the societal role of older persons, leading to their social and economic exclusion. The report highlights the growing recognition that ageism must be addressed. It notes significant regional differences in the approaches that have been taken thus far in
addressing age discrimination and strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons. While some regional approaches have favoured mainstreaming issues of ageing and older persons into existing legislation, others have favoured the adoption of specific binding instruments.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

This brings me to the end of my introductory remarks concerning the reports under my responsibility to this Committee. I trust that you will find them useful in shaping your deliberations on these important issues of social development.

Thank you.