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**Message by
H.E. AMBASSADOR NESTOR OSORIO
PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
TO THE TWELFTH SESSION OF
THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
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Madame Chairperson,
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs,
Distinguished Delegates and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address the opening of the 12th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on *“The Role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 Development Agenda”*.

In less than 1,000 days, we will approach the target date for realizing the MDGs – a vision we aspired to achieve at the dawn of the 21st century.

During the last 13 years, we have witnessed significant improvements in the lives of billions. Extreme poverty has fallen in every region; the proportion of people without access to decent water has been cut in half; housing conditions have improved for more than 200 million slum dwellers; 40 million more children are attending school; the world has achieved parity in primary education between girls and boys; and an estimated 5.2 million people in low and middle-income countries are now receiving life-saving HIV treatment.

These are great achievements, giving us the confidence that we can scale up and accomplish much more during the next 1,000 days.

However, despite this success progress has been uneven: eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, providing social protection for the vulnerable, combating global climate change, and creating new jobs – are all huge challenges yet to be tackled.

In addition, as we approach the MDG target date, we also need to use the next 1,000 days to set the post-2015 Development Agenda. Even if we were to fully achieve the MDGs by the target day, we still would have much work to do to get to the Future We Want – as agreed by the Member States in Rio, last June.

In forging the post-2015 Development Agenda, we must create a model of growth that is sustainable and citizen-centric and once again emphasize that sustainable development consists of many parameters, including healthcare, education, gender equality and social cohesion. Moreover, we should tap the

potential of scientific knowledge, and technological advancement and innovation, and transform public governance so that it enables us to achieve our vision.

The United Nation's Annual Ministerial Review, which will take place in July 2013 during the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, will focus on *"Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the MDGs."*

This will provide an opportunity to follow-up on the Rio+20 outcomes and spotlight the critical role that science, technology and innovation can play in each and every MDG, be it in fostering access to knowledge, education and learning; enhancing productivity, industrialization, economic growth and decent jobs; achieving food security, or promoting health and renewable energy technologies.

In all these areas, the role of governance and effective public administration cannot be overstated. Governments are uniquely positioned to create an environment conducive for positive synergies among science, technology and innovation, and for enhancing cooperation among all sectors of society, thereby facilitating a wider spread of innovation.

For instance, the World Economic Forum considers as underlying fundamental conditions of economic competitiveness and key to economic growth to be not only healthcare, education and technology readiness but also a country's focus on innovation, business sophistication and the culture of entrepreneurship. To achieve the latter, as pointed out by the former Prime-Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. Gordon Brown, at a recent Government Summit in Dubai, it is important to "tap the potential of every child by providing the best basic general education to all"; by "focusing on innovation and technological expertise", and by "ensuring that the opportunities are widely spread". These can be achieved only through strong government support and relevant policies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In this era of rapid technological advancement and spread of information and communication technologies, we are given an opportunity to listen to people and to partner in sustainable development on an unprecedented scale. Take for example the growing number of initiatives promoting e-participation, e-governance and e-services: 70 per cent of the United Nations Member States in 2012 provided a consolidated one-stop-shop portal for public services compared with 26 per cent in 2003.¹

Governments are increasing efficiency and transparency by providing more information online, simplifying administrative procedures, and streamlining bureaucratic functions. As of today, some 25 per cent of the 193 United Nations Member States have embarked on Open Government Data initiatives. Governments are starting to publish data collected by public institutions, an activity that leads to greater transparency and value co-creation. The private

¹ United Nations e-Government Survey 2012

sector and civil society actors today use public information and datasets to create more effective services and new products ranging from, for example, real-time public transportation tracking apps to medical devices that public health professionals use to remind all parents about the immunization of their children. There are no borders for technological innovations, and their benefits can improve the lives of millions.

It is the role of governments to facilitate technology transfer and to make innovative infrastructure available to all. Effective and efficient public administration can expand the gains of innovation through public service delivery and bring about changes more effectively than in the past.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The role of governance and public administration in enabling the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, MDGs and the Rio+20 vision is unequivocal. In times of financial and economic crisis, decreasing official development assistance support and growing uncertainties, it is especially important to promote and enable innovation. ECOSOC counts on your expertise in advising the United Nations Member States on new and more effective ways for participatory and responsive governance and whole-of-government administrative approaches to better deliver on the internationally agreed development goals and MDG targets by 2015 and beyond.

It is my sincere hope that these issues will be discussed during this session in concrete terms, and I would, therefore, like to invite the Committee to provide specific inputs to the Council for consideration by the United Nations Member States. I also call upon you to provide concrete advice on ways for the Secretariat to follow up and how it can support scaling-up successful developmental efforts of relevance.

I am waiting with great interest for the outcome of this session and counting on your valuable insights and advice.

I wish you all a successful and productive session.

Thank you.