UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

Opening address by
H.E. Mr. Oh Joon
President of the Economic and Social Council

"2015 Empowering Women and Sustainable Development Summit"
Opening ceremony
September 22, 2015, at UN Headquarters

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here today to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the World Conference of Women and allow me to thank the Sino-American Friendship Association for inviting to address this distinguished audience.

This year is a unique year for the world. Heads of State are coming together to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to renew their commitments to humanity.

The 2030 Agenda is based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity and will rely on the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

Gender equality, the empowerment of women, and the full realization of their human rights are essential for the achievement of sustainable development and for building peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

The Millennium Development Goals, adopted 15 years ago, played a key role in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. It highlighted the importance of addressing discrimination and inequalities faced by women and girls.

However, challenges remain. A comprehensive and transformative approach is urgently needed to address the structural barriers to gender equality.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals include a stand-alone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

The implementation of this goal and its targets can lead to changes that would enhance women's ability to fully enjoy their human rights, develop their full potential, and fully participate in decisions affecting their families, communities and countries.

Women must be able to influence decision-making on economic, social, and environmental issues at all levels, whether in public or private spheres.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The goal is ambitious, and it must be matched with an equally ambitious level of commitment and investment.

It requires a coordinated and integrated approach to ensure that a gender perspective is systematically incorporated into all national planning, budgeting and implementation.

Women and girls should be able to benefit from all policies for sustainable development.

We have an important task before us. We must mobilize our common resources and vision to confront these challenges – the fate of human beings and of our planet. We have a shared responsibility to do so.

As President of the Economic and Social Council, which is to lead the global implementation and review of the 2030 development agenda, I will continue to strengthen and harmonize the work of the ECOSOC

system, including the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Council will also lead the efforts to build an inclusive and engaging global partnership, bringing together all relevant stakeholders.

Through our collective expertise, I believe we can create action-led solutions that will turn the ambition of the 2030 development agenda into reality.

Thank you.

/END/