



United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Middle-Income Countries

**Opening remarks by H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva,
President of the Economic and Social Council**

11 May 2023

President of the General Assembly,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honored to join you today at this high-level meeting on Middle-Income Countries.

At the midpoint to 2030, with only 7 years left, we are faced with an urgent task to accelerate action on Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite significant progress in the past decade, many middle-income countries are confronted with huge challenges in achieving sustainable development. Middle-Income countries represent about one third of global GDP and are major engines of global growth. At the same time, they are home to 62 per cent of the world's poor. According to recent data, 82 percent (or 72 million people) of the total new global extreme poor (those pushed into extreme poverty by the pandemic) are in MICs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the interdependence of social, economic, and environmental systems, and the need for a more integrated approach to development. For many this is also an existential crisis.

We must, therefore, seize this moment of crisis as an opportunity to transform our economies and societies towards a more sustainable and resilient future. We must adopt a more holistic approach to development, one that goes beyond GDP and considers the multi-dimensional nature of sustainable development.

By leveraging tools such as the Beyond GDP approach and the Multi-dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), Middle-Income Countries can identify areas of vulnerability and develop targeted policies and strategies to reduce environmental risks and climate change vulnerabilities.

Middle-Income Countries will be crucial to the global green transition that is needed to mitigate climate change and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While they have contributed little to climate change in the past, several of them have recently become significant emitters of global greenhouse gas, and have been responsible for biodiversity loss, and other environmental challenges.



As we approach the midpoint of the decade of action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is critical that all of us - Member States, the UN system, civil society, the private sector - take bold and transformative action towards sustainable development in Middle Income Countries.

Some Middle-Income Countries have already made ambitious climate commitments. But many countries lack the resources, including finance, technologies and technical capacities, to meet their development goals. These countries require external support to make their just green transition a reality.

This year at the HLPF in July for the first time we will have a discussion focused on the Middle-Income Countries and the challenges they face in advancing the 2030 Agenda. I hope that today's meeting, the HLPF, as well as the SDG Summit in September will provide at least some of the solutions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sustainable development is a shared responsibility. The SDGs cannot be achieved without addressing the needs and specific challenges of MICs, as these countries are key actors in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We must work together to create an enabling environment for sustainable development and to ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you.