

**Statement of the President of ECOSOC
H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa (Nepal)
Briefing to the UN Human Rights Council on the
2025 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable
Development**

**18 September 2025
[video message]**

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is both an honour and a privilege to address this august gathering.

At the outset, I take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of deepening collaboration between the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council for advancing inclusive development and human dignity.

I also wish to recall Human Rights Council resolution 37/25 of March 2018.

Through that resolution, the Council decided to invite the President of ECOSOC to present each year, during your regular session, on the outcomes of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The intent was clear: to ensure that the human rights and development pillars of the UN system are integrated, with particular attention to the means of implementation advanced together as one integrated package.

This approach recognizes that progress on one pillar reinforces the other.

It is in this context that I am pleased to brief you today on the key outcomes of the 2025 High-Level Political Forum.

Excellencies,

This year's High-Level Political Forum carried a special weight.

Held just days after the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Sevilla, it built on the momentum of the Compromiso de Sevilla - a renewed pledge to align finance with sustainability and to mobilize resources at the scale the 2030 Agenda demands.

The Forum was a gathering of energy and conviction.

More than 6,000 participants came together – governments, civil society, youth, Indigenous peoples, women's groups, scientists, business leaders.

It was not only a policy forum. It was a gathering of lived experience and urgency.

The Forum reviewed five Goals: health, gender equality, decent work, life below water and partnerships.

The message was consistent:
No Goal can be achieved in isolation.

Health depends on equality.

Equality depends on decent work.

Decent work depends on protecting the planet.

And all depend on strong partnerships.

It was also the tenth anniversary of the Voluntary National Reviews.

Thirty-five countries presented the VNRs, bringing the total to more than 400.

That means over 400 stories of ambition and resilience – prove that even in difficult times, countries are willing to stand up and account for their progress before the world.

The Ministerial Declaration reaffirmed the 2030 Agenda as our universal roadmap.

It reaffirmed that sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace – and that SDGs seek to realize the human rights of all.

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,**

The discussions also revealed the depth of the challenge. Only a third of the targets are on track.

The financing gap remains vast.

But the spirit of the Forum was not despair. It was resolve.

The resolve to act—not in isolation, but in solidarity.

To move from rhetoric to results, and from aspiration to impact

The call was clear:

Reform the global financial architecture,
Expand concessional finance, and

Harness innovation to mobilize private capital.

Science, technology, and innovation—especially digital tools and artificial intelligence—were seen as powerful enablers, but only if governed inclusively and directed toward equity.

Partnerships were highlighted as indispensable - across sectors, across borders, across communities.

Indigenous peoples, women, youth, and those often left behind must be recognized as leaders, not just beneficiaries.

The Forum underscored the need for just transitions.

Workers and communities cannot be left behind as economies respond to climate change and technological shifts.

It also gave special attention to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries. Solidarity must be both universal and tailored.

And it stressed that the SDGs will only succeed if they take root locally.

With most targets requiring action on the ground, the Agenda will be won or lost in communities, cities, and villages.

Excellencies,

My Presidency is guided by the theme “Delivering Better”. It is about restoring trust in multilateralism, bridging divides, empowering the vulnerable, and turning commitments into action.

The focus is on five levers: transforming food systems, accelerating digital inclusion and youth entrepreneurship, advancing climate resilience, mobilizing financing for development, and commemorating 80 years of ECOSOC.

Each of these priorities speaks directly to human rights – from food security to the digital divide, to protecting communities on the climate frontlines.

This brings me to the commemoration of ECOSOC at 80 in January 2026 - and throughout the year.

From its inception, ECOSOC housed the Commission on Human Rights, the forerunner of this Council.

That legacy reminds us that development and human rights have always been intertwined.

As we mark this milestone, we do not only look back.

We recommit to ensuring that human dignity remains at the heart of multilateral action.

Colleagues,

This coming year will be pivotal.

With the Pact for the Future adopted, and building on the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Sevilla, the international community has signaled its determination to strengthen multilateralism and deliver results.

ECOSOC will play its part in ensuring coherence across these processes.

I count on this Council to ensure that the human rights dimension remains central - so that development cooperation is not only more effective, but also more just.

Resolution 37/25 envisioned this dialogue as a bridge between Geneva and New York. Let us use it as such.

Let us align our efforts.

Reinforce each other's mandates. Ensure that the SDGs are delivered in ways that advance both prosperity and human dignity.

And let us seize ECOSOC's 80th anniversary not just to commemorate history, but to shape a future where development and human rights advance together, leaving no one behind.

I thank you.

