



High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Closing remarks by H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King President of the Economic and Social Council 18 July 2019

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to address you at the close of this 2019 High-level Political Forum.

Over the past two weeks, the main message has been clear -- four years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: its power to inspire and mobilize action is still intact. The great mobilization and energy around this HLPF bears testimony to this.

I heard in this very room earlier today from a VNR-presenting, youth delegate how important the implementation of the 2030 agenda is to our most valuable resource — her generation —our youth. So important are the Sustainable Development Goals of this agenda that she also said we ought to stand in a show of respect whenever we speak of them. I also spoke with a group of youth delegates earlier today and they are keen on strengthening accountability to ensure better, faster

and more effective implementation. Reminding us that they are watching, they are fully engaged and they want to be more included.

I am encouraged and I trust that we can realize the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 if we all stay together and step up our actions.

Even though the global picture is mixed, we have made encouraging progress, sometimes despite political and other headwinds.

Yet, we are currently not yet on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

We aspire to realize the world we want in 2030. We understand the strategic importance of achieving the SDGs and halting climate change. But to deliver, we need to move out of our comfort zones in pursuing new ways of collective action. And we need to adapt and transform at a much swifter pace.

Still, we have heard how countries are sailing ahead in pursuing the SDGs.

This too is clear from our thought-provoking and insightful discussions on national implementation of sustainable development.

We heard uplifting messages from the forty-seven countries who presented voluntary national reviews. At a time of intense domestic pressures and significant challenges to multilateralism, their determination is an indication of the robust engagement and meaningful country ownership of the 2030 Agenda.

Many have been mainstreaming the SDGs into their planning documents or sustainable development policies. The 2030 Agenda has served as a blueprint for new or revised plans or strategies reinforcing also the implementation of the Paris agreement.

Looking ahead, we can expect that the SDGs will be more systematically incorporated in designing plans and policies, with a focus on interventions that have potential multiplier effects across the SDGs. We also need to reflect the SDGs into budgets and integrated financing strategies

and to enshrine them into our institutions and societies. And we need to recognize and give space for the actions of the multiple actors who are embracing the SDGs.

We can do all of this. Excellencies,

You have also reviewed and analyzed progress on six individual Sustainable Development Goals. And you have looked ahead at the power of SDG action to support empowerment, equality and inclusion. You have heard from countries in special situations and delved into issues related to multidimensional poverty, inequality, education, prosperity, the planet, peaceful societies and international cooperation.

All our sessions have provided manifold messages and policy recommendations that will make this the Forum unforgettable.

I will not attempt to summarize them here. Yet, with the kind assistance of the rapporteurs, I will capture these key messages and recommendations in my President's summary of this HLPF.

The actions we projected will contribute to accelerating implementation. They will help to enhance coherence and integration in our efforts at home and the world over.

Excellencies,

It is essential that we launch an ambitious decade of action that puts the world on a new trajectory for SDG achievement.

In so doing, we can kick-start a new phase of SDG implementation, with concerted, transformative action to end human suffering and protect our planet.

In September 2019, there is an opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to take our messages from this HLPF to the SDG Summit and the other events convened during the General Assembly's high-level week in September 2019 – namely the SG's Climate Action Summit and the high-level meetings on universal health coverage, financing for development and the SAMOA Pathway.

We heard a clear call from our keynote speaker Richard Curtis at the opening – let us look ahead at the decisive year of 2020 and “make a decisive recommitment”. Let us commit to take transformative actions between now and the 2020 summit on the UN anniversary.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank all of you for your invaluable contributions.

I would like to once again thank and commend the 47 countries who presented their VNRs this year and reiterated their strong commitment to turning the 2030 Agenda into concrete action.

I thank Mexico, Chair of the Friends of VNRs and Follow up of the HLPF for the Group’s good work and to encourage them as their work continues with the follow of the HLPF. Many of the recommendations we heard here today could indeed make for fruitful discussions within this Group of Friends of VNRs and Follow up of the HLPF.

I thank all States of the HLPF for your active engagement during this HLPF.

I thank my colleagues in the ECOSOC Bureau for their leadership and infinite support.

I thank the rapporteurs from Colombia and Liechtenstein for their assistance in formulating messages from our HLPF under ECOSOC to the SDG Summit in September.

I also thank the rapporteurs from Argentina, Bangladesh, the Netherlands, Romania and Tanzania, for their contributions to the President’s summary of this HLPF.

My special thanks also go to the stakeholders for their unwavering commitment to ensure we deliver on the promises of the 2030 Agenda.

I finally wish to thank the many support teams in the UN Secretariat who made this Forum possible. We did not always notice their work, but we all know that, without them, this exciting meeting would not have been possible.

I look forward to seeing all of you tomorrow at the High-level Segment of ECOSOC, where we will have the opportunity to look out into the future and discuss visions and projections for the SDGs and as well as other related long-term trends and scenarios.

Thank you.