

**Meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Chairpersons of the ECOSOC Functional Commissions and Expert Bodies**

**31 January 2020, 10 am – 12 pm  
ECOSOC Chamber**

**Opening remarks by  
H.E. Ms. Mona Juul  
President of the Economic and Social Council**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Chairs,  
Distinguished Bureau Members,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to wish you a Happy New Year and welcome you to the annual meeting of the ECOSOC Bureau with the Chairs of the ECOSOC Functional Commissions and Expert Bodies. I am especially pleased to welcome the entire ECOSOC Membership to this meeting, for the first time.

This is another critical year for us. It is the first year of the Decade of Action to deliver on the SDGs. It is also the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the UN. In September 2020, the first annual platform “SDG Moment” to drive SDG progress will take place.

Distinguished Chairs,

The General Assembly has decided that the theme for ECOSOC and the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) for 2020 is “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

This year’s HLPF will be the first after the SDG Summit held in September 2019 at the end of the first cycle review. It will give member states an opportunity to follow up on the Summit’s Political Declaration, focusing on areas to accelerate action and delivery. The six entry points identified by the first Global Sustainable Development Report, according to the scientists, can lead to the deep transformative change that this Agenda requires. These entry points will help guide our work this year and the first half of the decade.

The substantive guidance of the ECOSOC system is crucial to help member states prepare both for the work across the ECOSOC cycle and the HLPF. We also count on your valuable contributions to the thematic reviews of the forum.

Distinguished Chairs,

Our dialogue today will also provide the opportunity to see how you have been responding to resolution 72/305 on the strengthening of ECOSOC and your contributions to ECOSOC, including the Integration Segment, and the HLPF.

As you are aware, the implementation of the ECOSOC Strengthening resolution will be reviewed at the 74th session of the General Assembly over the next few months, along with the resolutions on the format and organization of the HLPF. We look forward to learning from Chairs about their best practices in responding to the recommendations of the resolution.

In addition, we seek your expertise in identifying the implementation gaps of the 2030 Agenda and ways to accelerate progress. This will also be helpful for the HLPF.

Indeed, as we prepare for the Decade of Action, it would be important that you begin to plan how your individual bodies, individually and together can contribute to accelerated SDG progress. For example, how does the ECOSOC system address the big challenges of the next decade - rising inequality, the climate crisis, the breakdown of social cohesion, lack of trust in institutions, the changing nature of conflict, growing nationalism and extremism.

Distinguished Chairs,

We have a full agenda ahead of us with very limited time. I am counting on your active participation in this dialogue. Together, we can identify specific ways in which we can fulfill our mandates and improve our system-wide coherence in contributing to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I also count on the active participation of ECOSOC Members.

Thank you.